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:
Thursday, 30 April 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Westside boys commander, 6 others freed

By Ophaniel Gooding

Rounding Leader of West Side Boys Foday Kallay and five others namely: Alihaji Fofanah, Mohamed Bangung, Samuel Kargbo, Osman Sesay, Mohamed Savage and Foday Kamara who were sentenced in 2006 for conspiracy, have been freed.

The Sierra Leone Prisons Department Public Relations Officer (PRO), Mohamed Jimmy revealed to Awoko that these convicts who were given 10 years each were released on Tuesday 28th April 2009 at about 5:25pm based on an 'Early Possible Date' (EPD) criteria.

He explained that EPD simply means that when an accused person has finished their period of sentence, they could be release at the earliest possible date referred to as EPD.

The PRO explained that the accused were detained in 2000 and were sentenced to 2006 and as it is now 2009 “they have now completed their time of sentence, taking into consideration the time they were detained” he said.

The PRO noted that they have not received any Presidential pardon this year.

The West Side Boys, an armed group in Sierra Leone, sometimes described as a splinter faction of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. It captured and held members of the West African peacekeeping force ECOMOG, journalists Christo Johnson, Pasco Temple and Ade Campbell (including members of the Royal Irish Rangers) in 2000, and was subsequently destroyed by units of the British Special Air Service, Special Boat Service and Parachute Regiment during September 2000 in Operation Barra.

The group was influenced to some extent by American rap and gangsta rap music, especially Tupac Shakur, and the “gangsta” culture portrayed in it.

Prior to their destruction, the group had expanded to around 400 members.

West Side Boys were heavy users of homemade palm wine, locally grown marijuana, and heroin bought with conflict diamonds.

Conflict diamonds were also used to purchase many of their weapons, which ranged from SLR rifles, AK-47 rifles and RPG-7 grenade launchers to 81 mm mortars and ZPU-2 anti-aircraft guns.

Most of their vehicles were hijacked from UN food convoys. One of the hostages rescued during Operation Barra has also claimed that the West Side Boys were supplied with ammunition by corrupt Jordanian UN peacekeepers.
As FAMBUL TOK Intervenes...
Widow & Former Fighter Reconcile

Nyuma, a former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel is now a relieved man as he has apologized to a widow whose husband he killed during the war.

Speaking at a Fambul Tok ‘burn-firer’ ceremony in Yengema village, Luawa Chiefdom, Kailahun district, Nepor told her audience that during the conflict, her husband, Mohamed, their three children including her, fled to neighboring Guinea for safety. She said whilst in Guinea, they faced lots of problems, chief among them, she said was hunger. She went on to explain that as a result the continued hunger they suffered, they decided to go back to their village in search of food.

Nepor said that the family arrived in Yengema safely and that whilst she was busy fending for food, her husband was captured and tied. She further explained that immediately she heard Mohamed crying, she rushed to the scene and saw a large number of rebels. She said she recognized Nyuma and pleaded with him not to kill her husband because they have three children and there was no one to take care of them.

According to her, because she identified Nyuma as one of the rebels, matters even worse as it did not go down well with him (Nyuma) who thought he would be prosecuted later. Immediately, she said, Nyuma corked his gun and fired her husband, Mohamed at close range. Nepor said when her husband was killed, Nyuma
LAWCLA organize training on gender laws

The Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA) has organized training workshop for forty civil society groups on the Gender Laws and HIV/Aids at the Fatima Hall in Makeni on 24th - 26th April 2009.

Speaking at the training workshop the chairman of the program Mr. Abdul D. Köösowa spoke of LAWCLA passion to diffuse the Gender laws into the society and mount up a formidable sensitization campaign on those laws. He said promulgation of these laws is one thing but said the dissemination aspect is one key element to make the people more proactive to respond to the benefits of the laws.

Facilitating on the Gender Laws Mr. Festus Taylor LAWCLA Legal Officer dealt with the background of the Gender and HIV/Aids act 2007, and proceeded with specific issues: the Domestic Violence act, the devolution of estates act and the registration of customary marriages and divorce, and the HIV/Aids act and a whole range of other relevant issues pertaining to the law and practiced in Sierra Leone.

Melron Nicol Wilson Director of LAWCLA expressed a passionate plea to the participants that the training is expected to be replicated to other members of their respective institutions so that more people will benefit from the training and the handbooks will serve as quick reference manual that they share when the needs raises. He assured them that other civil society groups in the south and eastern region will benefit as well from similar workshops and he distributed the certificates.
Joint border facility for Sierra Leone and Liberia Commissioned

Written by Bassie B Kanu

‘Sierra Leone and Liberia are slowly moving from war torn countries to development despite the fragility of the political situation and the serious economic problems both countries face’, Sierra Leone’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Zainab Hawa Bangura observed. She made this statement during the handing over ceremony of the Gendema Integrated Border Control Post at Gendema in the Sorogbema Chiefdom, Pujehun District.

The Japanese government funded the two hundred and fifty thousand dollars project. It was implemented by the UNDP, in order to control smuggling, illegal migration and other illicit cross border activities. Michael Schulenburg, the Executive Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Sierra Leone, said the opening of the border crossing point linking the two countries showed that the two countries were united to work together to further their joint future. He said both countries have decided to promote peace and stability in the sub region.

Mr. Schulenburg noted that the two countries were now a reference point for countries coming out of war. He said the UN was proud to be a part of the success story of the two countries. Commissioning the Boarder Post, Ambassador McNee Chairman of the UN Peace Building Commission pledged the United Nations continued support to Sierra Leone and Liberia. Conmany Wesseh, Liberian Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs said the Manor River Union would help to promote peace and development within the sub-region. The border post has immigration and customs, port health, phyto sanitary control services and staff quarters.
Sierra Leonens ungestillter Hunger nach Arbeitsplätzen

Sieben Jahre nach Beendigung des Bürgerkrieges steht vor allem die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung.

Rene Bührer Beinting
Internationala
Tuesday, 28 April 2009

Sierra Leones ungestillter Hunger nach Arbeitsplätzen

Sieben Jahre nach Beendigung des Bürgerkrieges steht vor allem die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung.

Die vor dem Kriegskonflikt herrschende Kriegskonfliktsituation, die sich durch den Kriegskonflikt und die wirtschaftliche Depression verschärft hat, hat die Arbeitslosigkeit in Sierra Leone nicht verringert. Die wirtschaftliche Situation ist weiterhin schwierig, und der Hunger nach Arbeitsplätzen ist ungestillt.

Die Regierung von Sierra Leone hat Maßnahmen ergriffen, um die Arbeitslosigkeit zu verringern. Sie hat versucht, neue Investitionen anzulocken und die Produktivität der Wirtschaft zu erhöhen. Jedoch ist die wirtschaftliche Situation weiterhin schwierig, und der Hunger nach Arbeitsplätzen ist ungestillt.

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Newspaper Summary

U.S. Warns of Negative Reaction if 2011 Elections Are Delayed
(Heritage, The News, The Inquirer, Daily Observer and New Democrat)

- The U.S. Government has warned that the international community will react negatively to any delay in the 2011 Presidential and General elections in Liberia and urged the passage of the population Threshold Bill.
- The position of the U.S. Government on the “controversial” Threshold Bill was contained in an official diplomatic letter to the House and the Senate.
- The U.S. embassy stressed that further delay in passing the Bill will jeopardize the timetable for the elections.
- The Senate has meanwhile reacted angrily to the U.S. Embassy warning saying the U.S. diplomat has no authority to write the body requesting the passage of any bills.

State-Owned University Graduates nearly 2,500
(Liberian Express, The Informer and Liberian Journal)

- The state-owned University of Liberia (UL) today graduated about 2,500 candidates in various disciplines.
- The graduation followed several last minute hitches including the late receipt of clearances by prospective graduates.

LACC, Nigerian Ambassador Hold Interactive Session
(The News, The Inquirer and Daily Observer)

- The Nigerian Ambassador to Liberia, H.E. Ebenezer Adigun has held an interactive session with commissioners and staff of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) to share the experiences and lessons learned by Nigeria in the fight against corruption.
- A LACC press release issued in Monrovia yesterday said during the interactive session, Ambassador Adigun said fighting corruption in Liberia like other developing countries would be difficult but expressed optimism that the commission would succeed with the support of all Liberians and relevant agencies of government.

PUL Concludes Two-day Media Conference
(The Daily Observer)

- The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) yesterday concluded a two-day media conference in Monrovia, with support from the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), aimed at enhancing the working conditions of all practicing journalists in the country.
- The workshop was also designed to set the stage for journalists in Liberia to redefine their cause and seek strategic industrial empowerment.

Nigeria Court Sentences 27 Ex-UNMIL Peacekeepers
(Liberian Express and Liberian Journal)

- A Nigerian court-martial has sentenced 27 former United Nations peacekeepers to life in prison after they were convicted of mutiny following protests over the nonpayment of their allowances.
- The soldiers, who had protested by blocking the highway with bonfires and chanting war songs condemning their superiors, were convicted on Monday.
They were among more than 800 rank-and-file who protested last year after they did not receive their allowances during their participation in a U.N. peacekeeping mission in Liberia. Their attorney, Femi Falana, vowed to file an appeal at the Nigeria appellate court to challenge the judgment of the court-martial in Akure, Ondo state.

**NEC Braces Up For Boundary Delimitation Exercise**
*Heritage*
- The National Elections Commission is expected to benefit from two training programmes to be sponsored by United States Agency for International Development, USAID through the Forecast Project-Liberia.
- A NEC release said the training programs would focus on areas of boundary delimitation and electoral management and would be held in Margibi and Bong Counties.

**Radio Summary**
**Star Radio** *(News monitored today at 9:00 am)*
**U.S. Warns of Negative Reaction if 2011 Elections Are Delayed**
*(Also reported on Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

**President Sirleaf Intervenes In the Detention of 23 Liberians at Zwedru Correction Palace**
- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has assured the people of Bong County that 23 of their citizens detained at the Zwedru Correction Palace in Grand Gedeh County would be released on bail.
- The 23 young people were arrested two months ago in connection with a violent incident in Gbarnga, Bong County and were transferred to the National Palace of Corrections without trial.
- President Sirleaf said though the men are being released, they will be prosecuted to serve as a deterrent.
- The President’s intervention followed mounting concerns from lawmakers, relatives of the detainees and Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET) for government to speedily try the young men or release them.
- At the same time, the Senate has ordered a speedy investigation into the detention and mandated its Judiciary Committee to report to the body within forty-eight hours for appropriate actions.
*(Also reported on Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

**President Sirleaf Inaugurates US$5.5M Renovated Tubman Military Barracks**
- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has dedicated the newly renovated Tubman Military Barracks in Gbarnga, Bong County.
- The military barracks which was renovated by the Chinese government at the cost of US$5.5 million is part of its support to Liberia’s reconstruction.
- Speaking during the dedication ceremony, President Sirleaf lauded the People’s Republic of China for its continuous assistance to the post-war development of Liberia saying the country remains committed to the one-China policy.
- For his part, Chinese Ambassador to Liberia, Zhou Yuxiao said his country remains committed to helping Liberia in its reconstruction process.
- While in Bong County, the President also broke grounds for the China-aided Agriculture Development Demonstration Centre in Suakoko.
*(Also reported on Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

**Truth F.M.** *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*
**PUL Concludes Two-day Media Conference**
**State-Owned University Graduates Nearly 2,500**
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A chance to promote reconciliation

By Huang Luo-feei

‘The council should also temporarily stop allowing cultural and artist groups to move into spaces that were once used for the detention or sentencing of political prisoners, including the military court, the first court, the detention center, the secret police center and other spaces.’

A global movement to build “peace museums” is taking shape. Concentration camps in Europe have been turned into museums, Cambodia has its Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, and South Korea has prison museums and the Gwangju May 18 Democratization Movement historic park. The preservation of political prisons and places where massacres took place as spaces to reflect on history and commemorate the victims of violence and oppression is a global trend and has created a “dark tourism” industry.

With the rising number of Chinese visitors to Taiwan and increased demand for teaching Taiwan’s history at schools of all levels, human rights memorials do not have to become “mosquito halls,” as rarely frequented buildings are called. Freshmen Discipline Camp and Oasis Villa on Green Island have long been must-see tourist attractions there. Jingmei Human Rights Memorial Park and Green Island Culture Park, both created at sites that witnessed 30,000 political cases involving between 140,000 to 150,000 victims of the White Terror, have been praised by various groups for their value as memorials.

The question — given that Taiwan is a democratic country in pursuit of cross-strait reconciliation — is why the civic groups and political victims who want these sites to be preserved are being accused of tearing society apart and fueling conflict. The answer is the pan-green camp’s short-sighted political manipulation. The pan-green camp has exploited the human rights value of the sites and the nation’s history of political persecution as a tool. By rushing through the creation of the Jingmei Human Rights Memorial Park for its electoral value in 2007, the camp displayed a lack of reflection and deeper understanding of the historical background.

Amid the controversy, President Ma Ying-jeou urged the Council for Cultural Affairs to consider Taiwan’s history, the feelings of inmates and expectations of residents in planning the park. Ma said that revitalizing historical sites need not conflict with preserving their meaning for human rights in Taiwan.

While paying tribute to victims of political persecution at a human rights monument on Green Island on Oct. 14, 2007, Ma said the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) had chosen to face history rather than gloss over or avoid it, and that the party would not allow such a tragedy to happen again.

Amid this controversy, the council should remember the original purpose of building Jingmei Human Rights Memorial Park rather than get caught up over whether to rename it.

The council should also temporarily stop allowing cultural and artist groups to move into spaces that were once used for the detention or sentencing of political prisoners, including the military court, the first court, the detention center, the secret police center and other spaces.

It should then develop a long-term plan with an open attitude to ensure that these spaces are preserved in such a way as to commemorate human rights. As to other spaces in the park, the government could plant grass and attract investment from the cultural sector to meet the calls of residents who want more open spaces and cultural activities.
Facing history is the first step toward reconciliation and museums and parks that commemorate human rights are sites that can touch the hearts of visitors.

If the KMT can accomplish tasks that could not be completed under the previous administration and in doing so openly face the excruciating history of political entanglement between the pro-unification and pro-independence factions during the Martial Law era, it would be the beginning of real social reconciliation.

Former political dissidents and individuals concerned with transitional justice hope Jingmei Human Rights Memorial Park and Green Island Culture Park will be preserved, along with other areas, including the former military prison in Ankeng Taipei County, the former correctional center in Tucheng Taipei County, and the navy guesthouse in Fengshan Kaohsiung County.

This is something the government can do immediately and would have particular significance following the passage of the Act Governing Execution of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Transitional justice may yet see a comeback; Ma should seize an historic opportunity.

Huang Luo-feei is secretary-general of the Association of Mainlander Taiwanese.

TRANSLATED BY TED YANG
Nigeria: '80 Percent of Prisoners Still Awaiting Trial'

Ibrahim Shuaibu and Victor Efeizomor

Kano/Asaba — Solicitor General of the Federation, Alhaji Abdullahi Ahmed Yola, has said it is unfortunate that 80 per cent of the people in the country's prisons are those awaiting trial.

He said that the Justice Sector Reform Coordinating Committee (JSRCC) is fully determined to checkmate decongestion of Nigerian prisons and all other menace jeopardising justice more especially to the common man.

His disclosure came on a day the Chairman, Senate Committee, on Women Affairs, Youth Development and Social Welfare, Senator Ema Ufot-Ekaette, decried the condition of the nation's prisons, saying it is uninhabitable and deplorable for inmates.

Speaking in Kano during the opening of a retreat for stakeholders of justice sector, the Solicitor- General of the Federation said due to the devastation and problems being encountered by the common man in the pursuance of justice, the Federal Government had decided to set up JSRCC to alleviate the problems being encountered by Nigerians.

He said the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Justice had made concerted effort towards the decongestion of the Nigerian prisons.

Ekaette, who is on a weeklong tour of the South- South States of the Niger Delta, made the assertion yesterday in Asaba, during a courtesy call on the Deputy Governor of Delta State, Professor Amo Utuama, along with members of her committee.

She said she was moved to tears when in one of the prisons in Delta State, she saw a 14-year-old girl with her mother and grand mother in the prison custody in a very poor and deplorable condition. He assured that funds had been set aside by the government to pay lawyers in the defense of less privileged persons in the country. He said the JSRCC in collaboration with the Security, Justice and Growth Program (SJG) had organised the retreat against the background of the need for constant review and assessment of the state of justice in the country.

This, he said, is particularly in relation to the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats affecting initiatives and programs embarked by the stakeholders to review the whole sector.
Should the U.S. prosecute Bush officials for torture? Two views

Yes: The standards we hold others to also apply to us.

By Mark J. McKeon

On Sept. 11, 2001, when the twin towers were hit, I was sitting in a meeting in The Hague discussing what should be included in an indictment against Slobodan Milosevic for war crimes in Bosnia. I was an American lawyer serving as a prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and there was no doubt that Milosevic should be indicted for his responsibility for the torture and cruel treatment of prisoners. As the head of state at the time those crimes were committed, Milosevic bore ultimate responsibility for what happened under his watch.

While at The Hague, I felt myself standing in a long line of American prosecutors working for a world where international standards restricted what one nation could do to another during war, stretching back to at least Justice Robert Jackson at the Nuremberg trials.

Those standards protected our own soldiers and citizens. They were also moral and right. So I didn’t understand why, a few months after the attacks in 2001, the Bush administration withdrew its consent to joining the International Criminal Court. Wasn’t accountability for war crimes one of the things America stood for? Although staying with the court did mean that the United States would be subject to being charged in that court, how likely was that to happen? Surely we would never do these things. And, in any event, the court could only assume jurisdiction over a person whose own government refused to prosecute him; surely, that would never happen in the United States.

And yet, seven years later, here we are debating whether we should hold senior Bush administration officials accountable for things they have done in the “war on terror.”

In 2001 and the following few years, we at the international tribunal built a strong court case against Milosevic. We presented evidence that he had effective control over soldiers and paramilitaries who tortured prisoners, and did worse. And we watched as other heads of state were indicted for similar crimes, including Charles Taylor in Liberia and, of course, Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

At the same time, I watched with horror the changes that were happening back home. The events are now well known: Abu Ghraib; Guantanamo; secret “renditions” of prisoners to countries where interrogators were not afraid to get rough; secret CIA prisons where there appeared to be no rules. I tried to answer the questions from my international colleagues at The Hague about what was happening in and to my country. But as each revelation topped the last, I soon found myself without words.

I hope that the United States has turned the page on those times and is returning to the values that sustained our country for so many years. But we cannot expect to regain our position of leadership in the world unless we hold ourselves to the same standards that we expect of others. That means punishing the most senior government officials responsible for these crimes. We have demanded this from other countries that have returned from walking on the dark side; we should expect no less from ourselves.
To say that we should hold ourselves to the same standards of justice that we applied to Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein is not to say that the level of our leaders’ crimes approached theirs. Thankfully, there is no evidence of that. And yet, torture and cruel treatment are as much violations of international humanitarian law as are murder and genocide. They demand a judicial response. We cannot expect the rest of humanity to live in a world that we ourselves are not willing to inhabit.

Mark J. McKeon was a prosecutor with the International Criminal Tribunal from 2001 to 2004 and a senior prosecutor from 2004 to 2006.

**No: Terrorists declared open-ended war against America.**

By Thomas Sowell

It used to be said that self-preservation is the first law of nature. But much of what has been happening in recent times in the United States, and in Western civilization in general, suggests that survival is taking a back seat to the shibboleths of political correctness.

We have already turned loose dozens of captured terrorists, who have resumed their terrorism. Why? Because they have been given “rights” that exist neither in our laws nor under international law.

These are not criminals in our society, entitled to the protection of the U.S. Constitution. They are not prisoners of war entitled to the protection of the Geneva Convention.

There was a time when people who violated the rules of war were not entitled to turn around and claim the protection of those rules. German soldiers who put on U.S. military uniforms, in order to infiltrate American lines during the Battle of the Bulge, were simply lined up against a wall and shot.

Nobody even thought that this was a violation of the Geneva Convention. American authorities filmed the mass executions. Nobody dreamed up fictitious “rights” for these combatants who had violated the rules of war. Nobody thought we had to prove we were nicer than the Nazis by bending over backward.

Bending over backward is a very bad position from which to try to defend yourself. Nobody in those days confused bending over backward with “the rule of law,” as Barack Obama did recently. Bending over backward is the antithesis of the rule of law. It is depriving the people of the protection of their laws, in order to pander to mushy notions among the elite.

Even under the Geneva Convention, enemy soldiers have no right to be turned loose before the war is over. Terrorists –“militants” or “insurgents” for those of you who are squeamish– have declared open-ended war against America. It is open-ended in time and open-ended in methods, including beheadings of innocent civilians.

President Obama can ban the phrase “war on terror” but he cannot ban the terrorists’ war on us. That war continues, so there is no reason to turn terrorists loose before it ends. They chose to make it that kind of war. We don’t need to risk American lives to prove that we are nicer than they are.

As if it is not enough to turn cutthroats loose to cut throats again, we are now contemplating legal action against Americans who wrung information about terrorist operations out of captured terrorists.

Does nobody think what this will mean – for many years to come – if people trying protect this country from terrorists have to worry about being put behind bars themselves? Do we need to have American intelligence agencies tip-toeing through the tulips when they deal with terrorists?
In his visit to CIA headquarters, President Obama pledged his support to the people working there and said that there would be no prosecutions of CIA agents for prior actions. Then he welshed on that in a matter of hours by leaving the door open for such prosecutions, which the left has been clamoring for, both inside and outside of Congress.

Repercussions extend far beyond issues of the day. Whole nations that rely on the United States for their security see how easily our president welshes on his commitments. So do other nations, including those with murderous intentions toward us, our children and grandchildren.

Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.