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:
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PRESS RELEASE
Freetown, Sierra Leone, 25 May 2009

Justice Renate Winter Re-elected President of the Special Court

Justice Renate Winter of Austria has been re-elected Presiding Judge of the Appeals Chamber, a post which makes her President of the Special Court.

Justice Winter joined the Special Court in December 2002. She served as Acting President of the Court from March to May 2004, and was elected to a one-year term in May 2008.

The Appeals Judges also re-elected Justice Jon Kamanda of Sierra Leone as Vice-President of the Court.

Judges of the Appeals Chamber and of Trial Chamber II sitting in The Hague met in Plenary last week to discuss residual issues and matters relating to the Court’s legacy. They also reviewed the Court’s completion strategy and looked at progress in the current proceedings.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

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Local News

Fambul Tok averts fatal revenge

Two brothers reconciled

They live in the same house in the village of Tanjadu in Kono district. Sahr N. takes care of his half brother, Abu. This year, both brothers embarked on upland farming. They have lived together for the past five years.

During the war, Abu was abducted by rebels and forced to beat up one Tamba N. (now deceased). As he had no alternative, he responded by flogging Tamba to death.

After the war, Abu sought refuge at his half brother's house and since that time they did everything together. Abu never had the opportunity to tell his half brother that he was responsible for the death of Tamba. Abu thought Sahr did not know the unfortunate situation.

Also, according to Sahr, when rebels abducted Abu, he followed them secretly and saw everything that occurred. During FAMBUL TOK reconciliation ceremony in Futingaya in Nimikoro chiefdom, Kono district, Sahr confessed that since Abu killed his brother he had also planned to harm Abu by all means.

During the bonfire, Abu confessed that he was forced to beat up Tamba. He therefore asked his half brother to forgive him.

On his part, Sahr told his audience that he had earlier planned to harm Abu and said they were like sitting on a time bomb.

The FAMBUL TOK reconciliation team intervened to reconcile the two brothers.
Foindor residents forgive ex-soldier

Family members of an ex-soldier in Foindor, Dangbaidu section in Kamara chiefdom in the eastern part of Sierra Leone are now relieved after ten years of isolation and blame. This is the fact that they have reunited with the whole community once again after pleading on behalf of the ex-soldier that led a group to wreck havoc on innocent people in 1998.

Testifying during FAMBUL TOK reconciliation ceremony in Dangbaidu village last week, Sahr Ellie recalled a date in 1998 when T.J and his colleagues entered the village. He explained that T.J led the group to where people were taking refuge. He said the ex-soldier ordered villagers to return to Foindor.

Sahr went on to state that initially he thought T.J had intention to save his own people but he (Sahr) realized that T.J had planned something else. He said he decided to hide somewhere to listen to conversations T.J had with villagers.

Sahr told his audience that he went through another route leading to Foindor and hid to watch what was going on. He said the rebels asked T.J what would be the fate of the villagers and T.J replied that all should be killed. He went on to say that the innocent people pleaded for their lives but T.J was very adamant. Sahr said his father was tied up, beaten and later beheaded. He stated that next was his mother who was sick and could not even walk. He told the gathering that the old woman begged but the rebels could not listen and was later beheaded. He explained that other family members were beheaded too. He said the most sorrowful part was when one of the rebels took a two month old baby and smashed it on the floor. The baby was also beheaded.

Another resident of Foindor Pa Komba Nargor came out and told his ordeal. He said his five children were also beheaded. He said after that his house was set on fire. He asked a rhetoric question saying that now FAMBUL TOK wants him to forgive but he has no house and his children are no more and therefore who will take care of him now he is old.

An old woman also explained how his husband was killed and pointed accusing fingers at T.J.

At the end of all explanations, the family of T.J came forward and asked for forgiveness. One of them, Yei Naomi Joe told the audience that for the past ten years they faced a lot of embarrassment as they were isolated.

She recounted that on one occasion she visited an elderly woman in Grafton and immediately after that the woman started crying saying that they (T.J’s) family was responsible for her status. Naomi said in less than two minutes, the whole place was crowded and she had to leave as she was completely embarrassed.

She said they have attempted on several occasions to reconcile with other families but it has difficult and now that FAMBUL TOK has created a save space for them they are willing to ask for forgiveness.

After that Sahr, Pa Nargor and others reconciled with T.J’s family and decided to let by gones be by gones.
The FAMBUL TOK reconciliation team intervened to reconcile the two brothers.

"I was forced to burn down my friend's house"

During the war, Quiwa hosted the family of Komba. He fed them every day. Komba whereabouts were unknown as people thought that he was killed.

After the war, Komba reunited with his family at Quiwa's residence but did not tell him what happened in Masundu village, Tankoro chiefdom in Kono district. They lived together for a very long time and each time Quiwa talked about his burnt house, Komba was jittery but did not know how to approach Quiwa because he has been very grateful to his family during his absence.

During FAMBUL TOK reconciliation ceremony in Masundu village, Komba was bold enough and stepped forward to confess. He explained that during the war, he was captured in Baiima just two miles to Masundu. He testified that he was brought down to Masundu and forced to set ablaze Quiwa's house. He said he wanted to resist but one of the rebels corked his gun and threatened to shoot him. He told his audience that he complied and set fire on Quiwa's house.

I was forced to burn down my friend's house but it was not my fault" Komba testified. He however asked Quiwa to forgive him.

Also, Quiwa was shocked and surprised because he never knew that his friend did the act. He said since FAMBUL TOK has asked them to forgive he has forgiven Komba. Both embraced each other.
Liberians want war crimes court

Liberians have asked the country's truth and commission to push for the establishment of a special court to prosecute atrocities committed during the civil war, a commission spokesman said Monday.

For the last week the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has been meeting with ordinary Liberians in a round of special popular consultations in all parts of the country.

"The TRC works to the wishes and aspirations of the Liberian people. What they want is what we do. They have asked for the establishment of a war crimes court the same way it was done in Sierra Leone and this is just what we will do," spokesman James Kpargoi said.

The TRC was set up in 2006 to probe war crimes and rights violations during the back-to-back civil wars that ravaged Liberia between 1989 and 2003 and left some 250,000 people dead.

The commission, modelled on the similar South African body which catalogued crimes committed during the apartheid era, has heard from a series of key figures in the civil war including some notorious warlords but cannot force anyone to take the stand.

The TRC cannot judge those who testify before it but can only recommend they be prosecuted in a final report due to be submitted to the Liberian government some time this year.

In January commission members had already said they would be recommending a special court be set up to try those guilty of war crimes and human rights abuses during the brutal civil wars.

With the testimonies wrapped up, the commission spent the last week holding consultative meetings to get ordinary Liberians to express their wishes in the 15 political regions of the country.

"The population believes that to strengthen the rule of law, individuals who bear the greatest responsibilities of atrocities committed during the war should be prosecuted," Kpargoi said.

"They recommended that the TRC should do due diligence by recommending prosecution for both individuals and organizations that committed heinous crimes against humanity and violated international humanitarian laws."

Liberia's neighbor, Sierra Leone already has a special war crimes court which is currently trying Liberia's former president Charles Taylor for his alleged role in arming and controlling the RUF rebels during the civil war.
Liberians want war crimes court: truth commission

MONROVIA (AFP) — Liberians have asked the country's truth and commission to push for the establishment of a special court to prosecute atrocities committed during the civil war, a commission spokesman said Monday.

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Liberia: Security Council Lists Hotspots

The UN Security Council team visiting here last week expressed concern over key areas, mainly the failure of the security sectors reform, rising corruption, capital flight, and the failure or inability of the government to implement Resolution 1532 mandating all member states to freeze the assets of targeted official of former President Charles Taylor.

Sources told this paper that the team listed these points during a closed-door meeting with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

But speaking to journalists before departure, Ms. Rice, for the team, said the country remains a "fragile" state. Liberia was one of the spots the team visited in its tour of African trouble spots, including DR Congo.

On the travel ban and the assets freeze, the Council's team was adamant, sources, insisting they would remain in place because those affected remain national security risks.

Amongst the team was Ms Susan Rice, a long-time Liberia observer who served as US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs when Mr. Taylor was in power here
International Clips on Liberia
05/25/2009 11:00:59
Rise in Maternal Mortality Explained

Source: All Africa Global Media Date: May 25, 2009

Monrovia, May 25, 2009 (allAfrica.com/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The rise in the number of women dying in childbirth in Liberia is being attributed to factors ranging from a lack of infrastructure and trained personnel to cultural beliefs around witchcraft.

A recent United Nations report said the maternal mortality rate had nearly doubled since the 1980s. The figures compare the pre-civil war Liberia to the period after the civil war; they also reflect the situation two years ago. For every 100,000 births, 994 women died in 2007 compared to 578 in 1987.

Dr. John Mulbah, one of only two obstetrician-gynecologists in Liberia, told AllAfrica in an interview that the long distances most people must travel to health centers, bad roads and lack of electricity were some of the factors that delayed women from reaching medical help, thus leading to deaths.

International Clips on West Africa
'BBC's Impact in Salone is Substantial'

Alasan Conteh

Source: All Africa Global Media Date: May 25, 2009

Concord, May 25, 2009 (Concord Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Effective today Monday 25 May, Director of BBC World Service, Peter Horrocks, would meet with audiences and listen to their comments about BBC's programmes in Sierra Leone and later Nigeria. "BBC's impact in Sierra Leone and Nigeria is substantial. We have a high level of audience loyalty, and the feedback we are getting is amazing," says the media guru.

During the six-day tour, he would meet with political and spiritual leaders, journalists, business partners and the BBC audiences from the two West African countries. In Sierra Leone, Horrocks would visit the amputee camp in Freetown, hold meetings with the country's vice president Samuel Sam-Sumana and the leader of the opposition, John Oponjo Benjamin.

Newspaper Summary
Special Land Commission Presents Report to President Sirleaf
- A Special Presidential Commission set up to mediate the persistent land disputes in Nimba County has presented its findings.
• The land disputes between residents mainly of the two major ethnic groups in the County have been ongoing for years.
• In its report, the 13-member Commission recommended that a moratorium be placed on public land sale in the county.
• The commission also recommended the provision of funds to relocated contenders in order to enhance reconciliation among residence of the area.
• President Johnson Sirleaf endorsed the recommendations and appealed to all parties to land disputes in the county to suspend land-related court cases, pending the Commission’s intervention.

**Liberians Demand War Crimes Prosecutions**
*Public Agenda, The Monitor and The Inquirer*
• Liberians from the 15 political sub-division of the country have recommended prosecution for individuals who they say committed heinous crimes and violated international humanitarian law.
• The delegates at the end of three simultaneous Regional consultative meetings of Liberia’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) called for the establishment of a war crimes court for Liberia.
• They believed prosecuting individuals who bear the greatest responsibilities for atrocities committed will strengthen the rule of law and end the culture of impunity in the country.

**UN Envoy Decorate 28 Ghanaian Peacekeepers with UN Medals**
*Daily Observer*
• Speaking at an award ceremony for 28 Ghanaian peacekeepers serving in UNMIL, UN Envoy, Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj said UNMIL was in the Country to assist Government and the people move from years of trauma, fear and pain into a new era of peace, security and development.
• Ms. Løj said it was therefore important for personnel of the mission to perform their duties with the outmost respect for the communities they serve.
• Also speaking at the programme, the Head of the Ghanaian contingent, Roy Amuni said the police contingent were fully engaged in hard work, compassion and respect for human dignity in bringing peace to the country.

**US$1.7m 'Letter' Pass Through Relevant Offices**
*The News, Heritage, Public Agenda*
• There are reports that the transfer of the US$1.7 million withdrawn from the Central Bank of Liberia passed through the relevant offices of the bank.
• Postmarks on the April 22, 2009 official letter from the Finance Ministry suggest that the communication first went to the Executive Governor’s office.
• The letter from the Finance Ministry carried the alleged signatures of Elfreda Tamba, Deputy Minister for Revenue and Arthur Fumbah, Deputy Minister for Expenditure and Debt Management.
• What appeared to be the signature of Tarnue Mawolo, Deputy Finance Minister for Administration was also affixed to the letter.

**UNDP Delivers Initial Logistical Aid To LACC**
*The Monitor*
• The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has delivered a consignment of 10 desk top computers to the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission to enhance the commission work against corruption.
• The donation is preliminary to other consignments and technical assistance that the UNDP, through its Peace Building Fund, has targeted for the LACC.
• Presenting the ten computers, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative for Programme, Nessie Golokai said the UN agency was pleased to identify with the Commission.
• In response, the Acting Chairperson of LACC, Joseph Acqui expressed gratitude to the UNDP for the donation and its continuing support to the Commission.
• The project, “Supporting the Anti-Corruption Commission”, will provide assistance for training and logistics – two vehicles, office equipment and furniture, stationery and other consumables – to the commission to enhance its work in the fight against corruption.
New Army Strength Increases...As AFL Graduates 138
(The Inquirer and The Informer)

- The sixth class of the new Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) graduated from the Initial Entry Training (IET) at the Barclay Training Center on Friday, May 22, 2009.
- The 138 graduates are the first class of the new AFL to be trained by both Liberian and American Drill Instructors through the Security Sector Reform Program (SSR) at Camp Sandi Ware, Careysburg.
- The recruits underwent eight weeks of training under the guidance of five U.S. Army trained Liberian Drill Instructors of the Armed Forces Training Command (AFTC) in the Initial Entry Training.
- The recruits will return to Camp Ware to undertake Advanced Infantry Training before moving onto their assignments as members of the AFL.

Radio Summary

Star Radio (News monitored today at 9:00 am)

Tension Brews among Residents of Suburb of Gardnersville
- There are reports that tension is growing among residents of the Gardnersville suburb over the planned demolition of several homes in the “Supermarket” community.
- In an interview, a spokesman of the concerned residents said more than 100 concrete buildings have been marked for demolition.
- The Spokesman said the exercise will affect more than 15,000 residents who have lived in the area for more than 25 years now.
- They described the three-day notice given them to vacate the area as “unjustifiable” and called on the President to intervene.

Former AFL Chief of Staff Says Deactivated Soldiers Have no Legitimate Claim
- A former chief of Staff of the Armed Force of Liberia, Retired General Henry Dubar said deactivated soldiers have no legitimate reason to be disgruntled.
- He said the former soldiers are not covered by pension rights because they did not serve the army for up to 15 years.
- According to the retired General the 1956 Defense Act states that only soldiers who serve the army for fifteen years are eligible for pension.
(Also reported on Sky F.M., and ELBC)

Sunken Ship Finally Removed From Monrovia Harbour
- The sunken vessel M.V. Tom Alexandria has finally being removed from the harbour of the Freeport of Monrovia.
- The ship sunk at the Freeport in 2001 and has created insufficient berthing space for vessels.
- Authorities of the National Port Authority said the sunken vessel had served as a serious impediment to revenue generation at the port.
(Also reported on Sky F.M., and ELBC)

Special Land Commission Presents Report to President Sirleaf
(Also reported on Sky F.M., and ELBC)

Truth F.M. (News monitored today at 10:00 am)

Liberians Demand War Crimes Prosecutions

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