Musa Tarawallie VP Ambition: Mandingos Clash In Kenema, 8 Arrested

Sexual Violence: More Needs to be Done In Salone - UN Rep

Germany Provides €.5m Nutritional Support In Sierra Leone

IMC Launches 2011 National Media Award

Sierra Leone a role model for UN
Musa Tarawallie VP Ambition: Mandingos Clash In Kenema, 8 Arrested

By Mohamed Mansour

Report from the Kenema Police Station says one Journalist and three Mandingos, who were reportedly sent by the Minister of Internal Affairs to organize and sell 1200 vice president ambition to Mandingos in Kenema, and seven other Mandingos, have been arrested following a clash that erupted after a brief meeting. It was reported that Joseph invited all the different Mandingos groups in Kenema to the Sport Club in Kenema on Saturday to unite them ahead of the proposed visit of Tarawallie to that part of the country. The meeting apparently ended in a disagreement in which some of the people physically attacked each other. One of the accused persons, Ibrahim Saneh, informed Concord Times shortly after making his statement at the Kenema Police Station that he was not part of the arrangement but was informed by Gbenga that he was officially sent by Tarawallie to organize the meeting. "I was not at the meeting but I learnt of the event when I was informed that there was a big fight among the Mandingos ethnic group in the township," he said. In a snap interview along Hangba Road, Resident Commissioner (East) William Juana Smith said he was informed about the development but could not make further comment because the matter is under police investigation. Meanwhile, spokesman for South Eastern Alliance for President Ernest Koroma who also observed by Deputy Government Spokesman, Sylvester Swaray, denied the allegation that the meeting was held in the name of Musa Tarawallie. "I have been informed about the development but Musa is not in country at the moment and I am not aware of any meeting of that nature," he concluded. While awaiting outcome of police investigation, it would be recalled that at least 38 troubleshooters were arrested by the police following clashes between members of the Fulani and Mandingo ethnic groups shortly after the elections in Guinea over a year ago. Over a thousand residents of Kenema and its environs were said to have trooped to some of the major streets in the township to express their views on the outcome of the presidential run-off when riot broke out mainly between members of the Fulani and Mandingo ethnic groups that left scores of people injured and property destroyed. Some political analysts have speculated that if the latest conflict in Kenema is not resolved quickly, it may degenerate into a big political issue that would spread beyond Kenema district.  

Germany Provides C.5m Nutritional Support In Sierra Leone

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has donated 500,000 to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) for nutrition assistance to pregnant and nursing mothers and young children. This contribution of the Government of Germany complements the Government of Sierra Leone's health care initiatives to improve nutrition in pregnant and lactating mothers leading to higher birth weight, improved breastfeeding for children, and better nutrition during the first 1000 days of a child's life. The donation will enable WFP to purchase supplementary food fortified with vitamins and minerals for mothers and young children. "Nutritional support to vulnerable women and children is an essential component of basic health care, which greatly contributes to saving lives and improved infant and child nutrition said WFP Sierra Leone Country Representative, William Hart.  

Sexual Violence: More Needs To Be Done In Sierra Leone - UN Rep

By Ishak bin Tarawallie

United Nations Secretary-General Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict yesterday said in Freetown that there is a need for the Government and the international community to support the work of the Special Representative and to ensure that the report's recommendations are implemented. "We have to work together to end sexual violence and to ensure that justice is done for all victims," he said. The Special Representative said that the report's recommendations include the establishment of a national mechanism to address sexual violence, the provision of training and resources for the police and the judiciary, and the creation of a national database of cases. "We need to work together to end sexual violence and to ensure that justice is done for all victims," he said.  

Market Vow To Indict Govts If...

The Secretary General of the Sierra Leone Market Women's Association, Madam Marie Bob-Kandeh, has said that market women who hold executive positions in government should fail to follow the recommendations that will come out of the Sierra Leone Conference on Development and Transformation slated for December 14 to 17 this year at the Maita Conference Centre. She was speaking at an exclusive all-market women's consultative forum with the Gender Specialist at the Secretariat of the National Women's Forum who brought together representatives from the various markets across the country. She said, "If women are not represented in the decision-making process, they will not be able to influence policies that affect them. We are calling on the government to make sure that women are included in decision-making processes." Madam Marie Bob-Kandeh, who represents the Market Women's Association, said that market women are often marginalized in society and that they have to work twice as hard as men to achieve the same results. She added, "We have to work together to end sexual violence and to ensure that justice is done for all victims." She said that the government has a responsibility to ensure that women's voices are heard and that their rights are protected. "We are calling on the government to make sure that women are included in decision-making processes."
Statement by Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Margot Wallström

NEED TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE AS A TOOL OF POLITICAL INTIMIDATION IN RUN-UP TO ELECTIONS IN SIERRA LEONE

As part of an official visit to West Africa, I am currently in Sierra Leone - a post-conflict country - to gather a better understanding of how sexual violence during the war has influenced the society after the guns have fallen silent.

During my visit, I have held discussions with the United Nations Country Team, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), caregivers, survivors of sexual violence, and the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone Police Force. I also met with the Solicitor General, the Chief Justice, the Minister and Deputy Minister of Gender Affairs, and the Executive Representative of the Executive Secretary General, Mr. Schumacher. Yesterday I travelled to Maleme, where I visited a rehabilitation project for victims of sexual violence, and engaged with various interlocutors dealing with the issue.

I understand that the country as a whole, including the Government of Sierra Leone, wants to look to the future, instead of dwelling on the past. This is a comprehensible risk. But we must not ignore the past or forget the survivors of sexual violence. Only a country thoroughly addressing the wrongdoings of the past can build a solid foundation for a successful and sustainable future. More needs to be done to support these survivors, both in terms of access to justice, services and to help them reintegrate into society. Additional resources are also required to strengthen the capacity of the judicial system in order to address the issue of sexual violence.

Preventing sexual violence is particularly important as Sierra Leone is drawing closer to elections, a period during which sexual violence is often used against political opponents, especially in post-conflict situations. I call on all people in positions of influence in Sierra Leone to speak up against the use of sexual violence as a tool of political intimidation and to do their utmost to put in place measures to prevent sexual violence from being employed to this effect.

I will continue to monitor the situation and to engage with the Government, the UN Country Team, civil society in Sierra Leone and the international community on this issue.

69% OF CITIZENS LACK ADEQUATE TOILET

By Salimah Bah

As Sierra Leoneans join the global world to mark this year's World Toilet day, the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) network, jointly celebrated the occasion with the theme Crisis Talks.

Speaking at the occasion which took place at their Campbell Street office, the Acting Chairman, Saa Mustapha Bia, said his organization is in solidarity with the 2.6 billion people who practice open defecation. He added, referring to a crisis talk aimed at acknowledging the life-saving power of the toilet and calling on stakeholders to address the unhealthy health hazard. He said it is unimaginable to think of a life without a toilet in a home, workplace, or public toilet. He maintained that in Sierra Leone the issue has been taken for granted but added that it is a deadly reality for the 5 million people. He said about 69% of citizens do not have access to adequate sanitation, 49% of which still practice open defecation.

He said such a practice like urinating in rivers leads to disease such as acute diarrhoea, dysentery and cholera. He said others have resorted to roadsides, gutters, buckets, plastic bags, open field and street as toilets. He said the crisis talk about toilet is a taboo that warrants the attention it deserves, which he said could eventually lead to death. He maintained that everyone in the country should have the right to access toilet facilities anytime and anywhere, adding that no one should die of not having a toilet. He therefore urged the government and other political parties to put premium on the need for people to have adequate sanitation in their various environments.

African Statistics Day Observed

King Koroma, said this year's theme: "Keeping Accounts To Improve Africa's Present For a Brighter Future" was specifically chosen to highlight the importance of the system of national accounts in the development of a nation.

The celebration, he furthered, takes place in all African countries and that Sierra Leone this time decided to mark its own in Freetown in recognition of the decentralization process in the country.

Mr. Koroma explained that in 2011, Statistics Sierra Leone has carried out a series of activities in accordance with the 2011 Road Map conceived within the framework of its strategic plan.

He disclosed that in 2012, the management of Statistics Sierra Leone will focus on planning for the next round of National Population and Housing Census with the aim of having a comprehensive and internationally accepted census.

According to him, the next round of census will be conducted in December 2013 using improved technology, while the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) will be devolved from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to Statistics Sierra Leone.

Mr. Koroma frowned on the proliferation of institutions collecting statistical data in the country in contradiction of the Statistics Act 2002 and stressed the need to construct a modern building for Statistics Sierra Leone with IT sophistication for a nationwide integrated system.

In his keynote address, the Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Development Abayi Foday Mambury commended Statistics Sierra Leone for commemorating the day.

He noted that it was important to ensure that Statistics Sierra Leone construct a modern building that would be of the same standard as other international statistics offices for the purpose of effective service delivery.

Standard Chartered Targets

Attitudinal and Behavioural Change Secretary, urged boys to change their attitude towards their parents and focus on education which according to him is the only best thing that will make them succeed in life.

He asked them to copy positive male role models in society who have contributed to the socio-economic development spectrum of the country, and not copy bad examples that will affect their fruitful destiny.

Dr. Thomas said the theme 'Giving Boys The Best Possible Start In Life' is important for boys because it will help them refrain from drugs taking and toxic drinking for sustainable health and psychological thinking.

He said to develop to manhood is a process that needs stages so that they must focus on education first and not running after young girls as this could destroy their future ambition.

SLPP Springs Back To Life

They said their spirit had been energized by the fact that the weak link in their midst had given way to very committed people that are determined to take the party to higher heights.

Other key stakeholders at the meeting included erstwhile presidential affairs minister Dr. Sheku Sesay and Ambassador Foday Dabo.

Meanwhile, the appointment of Dr. Kadi Sesay as running mate to Rgl. Brig. Julius Maada Bio continues to be welcome and applauded in the Northern Province where she hails from.

An Interview done by SLPP Northern Region Chairman Dr. Alfred Bobson Sesay with Universal Radio on Dr. Kadi Sesay's appointment has been generating a lot of goodwill in the region.

The interview has been aired by radio stations in Port Loko and Tonkolili districts from where reactions have been very positive, according to Dr. Alfred Bobson Sesay.
3rd Batch of Military personnel jets in today from Darfur

By Alfahil M. Kamara

The final batch of Military personnel on peacekeeping mission in Darfur will jet in today after six months operations. According to Major Ken Jibiee, Director of Communications of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RLAF), 65 personnel armed personnel arrived Saturday at the Lungi International Airport from Darfur, and a handful arrived on Sunday with the final batch expected today.

Family members and well-wishers were standing behind the barricaded areas patiently waiting to receive their relatives from Darfur. The incoming peacekeepers from Darfur celebrated with the ones that were waiting for their departure to Darfur as they all dressed in their desert combat.

Lieutenant Colonel Albert Y. Kargbo Director of Peace Keeping at Ministry of Defence, welcomed and congratulated the personnel for performing their functions successfully and returning home on time.

"You have contributed towards global peace as other United Nations member states did to us some years ago," he added. Corporal Umaru Kanu, one of the peace keepers from Darfur who was also part of the communication team during their operations, said his tour in the country was as compared to the climate here as a soldier they were able to overcome the situation. He stated that the Sudanese people are not accommodating, and they found it very difficult to communicate the message of peace to them, but with time the Sudanese were able to understand the need for peace messages.

He advised his comrade that they should be very careful in discharging their duties as they will find it very difficult to distinguish between civilians and combatants, as the same carries a weapon. He added that they should be focused and aggressive as the people are unpredictable.

Examinations of UBA & Access Bank Completed

By Winston Ogbukute-Macaulay Jr

The central Bank of Sierra Leone (CBSL) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have completed a joint examination of United Bank of Africa (UBA) and Access Bank SL. Ltd. The six man supervisory team from the college of Banking Supervision of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) conducted the examination to assess the operations of both banks in a bid to identify risks and challenges confronting the operations of both banks. On completion of the examination, the six man team met with the Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone Sheku Sambadee Sessay and submitted their report which the Governor said he found "very useful and insightful." The team conducted a similar exercise last August where they examined Siya Bank SL Ltd and preliminary results threw significant fresh lights on a number of issues. The study he said also provided a unique opportunity for the sharing of the country specific experiences between the Bank of Sierra Leone and the Central Bank of Nigeria.

The examination was carried out to facilitate the exchange of information, views and assessments among the two Central Banks in order to allow for a more efficient and effective consolidation of policy decisions. It is expected that from the examinations, the team will help develop a common understanding of the risk profile of the banks as well as coordinate, review and assess risks to establish supervisory plans and contain any cross border challenges that will be deducted.

UN Special envoy says treat SGBV with "utmost seriousness it deserves"

By Poinceter Sama

The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallstrom in her maiden Press Briefing on her arrival in Sierra Leone has warned all in the country that "Gender based violence should be treated with the utmost seriousness it deserves" adding that we should "play the past behind and look to what the future holds." Ms. Wallstrom made the remark in compliment of the gains the country has acquired so far in dealing with the prevailing issues on sexual and gender-based violence since the end of the protracted civil war.

Looking smart and dressed in a gray outfit at UN’s Hotel Cabaflena conference room, Wallstrom said that her visit to Sierra Leone is part of her mandate in looking at post-conflict societies, particularly countries that have experienced civil wars amidst alarming cases of sexual and gender-based violence during those wars.

The Swedish national, who has spent part of her life agonizing for the rights and needs of women, declared that she has held consultation with the government and concerned institutions, looking at what they have done so far in ensuring the dignity of women who have been victims of malfeasance.

"Gender based violence should be treated with the utmost seriousness it deserves" she said, urging women to play active role in preventing sexual based violence as it is happening in Rwanda, Kenya etc. more especially at the country approaching general elections.

In a very concrete statement, the SRSG explained that the United Nations is quite attentive on issues dealing with gender based violence as enshrined in Resolutions 1325 and 1820, and recently 1888 and 1880 respectively.

Modern Wallstrom reiterated that sexual violence during conflict is a scourge affecting millions, of which girls are also affected. It is often a conscious strategy deployed by armed groups to humiliate opponents, destroy individuals and the very fabric of society she asserted.

She pointed out that bearing in mind the brutality women folks faced in the eleven-year conflict, the office, therefore, sought to redress and claim women’s rights, increase recognition of rape as a tactic and consequence of war through awareness-raising activities at international and country levels through sustaining media attention.

With her experience in dealing with issues pertaining to women emancipation, Wallstrom viewed that sexual violence in conflict is under-reported and under-addressed stigmas associated with rape prevent survivors from coming forward to report those crimes, and most unfortunately, many countries do not have laws that can be used to prosecute perpetrators and mechanisms that can protect survivors.

Ms. Wallstrom, an author and co-founder of outstanding women organizations, has served as Chair of the Inter-agency Network, UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, Minister in the Swedish Government, Environment Commissioner and Vice-President of the European Commission.

Mother abandons baby for Le 200,000

By Enmanuelle Kaljon

The whereabouts of Memunatu Lansana mother of a four-year-old baby girl who obtained goods worth two hundred thousand Leones (Le200,000) and left her baby behind some two weeks ago is still unknown.

A trader, Kadatu Lansana who resides at Kilo Bay back of FAWE School, where the goods is now staying, is struggling to take care of the baby and her own children.

She said the woman was suffering with the child so she gave her the goods to sell two weeks ago so she could manage her life, but she has since not heard from her.

Kadatu Lansana sells Doughnuts along Garrison Street adjacent Lito Hotel and she has to take the baby girl along everyday.

"She is a quiet baby but she does not like sweet things and prefers only rice," Kadatu Lansana said as she smiled at the baby sitting in front of her.

She said she however finds it difficult to take care of the baby which has not yet started walking and MC with her own two children.

She lamented that the baby’s mother do not want to repay her money.

The one year six month old child was looking very unhealthy as she sat on the floor with bare feet, wearing pink pants and multi-coloured blouse.