

INTERNATIONAL

Albright urges Sierra Leone peace

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (AP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright called on political leaders in Sierra Leone to stick by a peace agreement negotiated after an eight-year civil war, in which anti-government rebels committed widespread atrocities.

During her several-hour stay here, Albright also witnessed the effects of the war firsthand by visiting a camp where 516 wounded Sierra Leoneans are being treated. All lost limbs during the conflict, mostly the result of machete-wielding insurgents.

Albright, who is on a six-nation tour of Africa, met with

the elected President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and Johnny Paul Koroma, an ex-junta leader whose forces are allied with the main rebel group, The Revolutionary United Front.

Later, Albright met at the U.S. Embassy with Foday Sankoh, leader of the revolutionary front, and was joined by Koroma. A senior administration official said Albright wanted to urge them to cooperate in the demobilization of forces and other aspects of the peace agreement.

Sankoh's forces killed tens of thousands, mutilated countless others and left much of this west African country

in ruins. Despite their abuses, mostly against the civilian population, the RUF leaders were granted a power-sharing arrangement with the elected government and also were granted an amnesty. Albright sees them as the key to successful implementation of the July peace deal.

At a news conference, Albright said: "We and the international community will be watching to see that the rebels make good on their promises to end the fighting and disarm."

She announced \$55 million in support of the peace effort, mostly food aid. After the meeting with the political leaders, Albright went to the

war victims camp and was serenaded there by a group of young girls. She described the experience of seeing the hundreds of amputees as "heart-wrenching and stomach-turning."

"These are people who had their limbs chopped off for no reason," she said.

At another point Albright said: "It's hard to reach out and shake a hand with somebody and know they don't have a hand."

Albright began her African tour with a brief stopover in Conakry, Guinea, for a meeting with President Lansana Conte. Afterwards, she boarded a helicopter for (See Sierra Leone, Page 13)

South African Neo-Nazi loses appeal

PRETORIA, South Africa (AP) — A neo-Nazi leader who once threatened race war in South Africa faces imprisonment after a judge on Monday rejected his appeal of a six-year prison sentence for two assaults on black men.

In handing down judgment, High Court Justice Willie van der Merwe said the community expected a political leader to be responsible and that TerreBlanche deserved no special treatment.

"Our courts (are) there to help the community to live in harmony. This could only happen if courts could mete out punishment without fear and without regard of persons," van der Merwe said.

TerreBlanche has been free on \$3,300 bail following his conviction in 1997 by a lower court in Potchefstroom, 100 miles southwest of Pretoria.

TerreBlanche can appeal to the Court of Appeals in Bloemfontein, Justice Department spokeswoman

Lulu Ngoma said.

The leader of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement was convicted in 1997 of attempted murder for beating a black worker so savagely, the victim became paralyzed, and for assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm for setting his dog on another black man in a separate incident.

TerreBlanche, 55, has led the most radical wing of Afrikaner nationalists for two decades. Since the 1994 elections that ended

apartheid, he has been consigned to the sidelines.

His group seeks an autonomous state for Afrikaners, the Dutch-descended white settlers of South Africa who ruled during apartheid.

The group set off bombs that killed 21 people on the eve of the 1994 vote.

Zimbabwe to compensate Army victims

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — President Robert Mugabe ordered provincial officials to prepare compensation claims for victims of army atrocities during a crackdown on a rebellion in the 1980s, state radio reported Monday.

Mugabe's comments during a church gathering Sunday marked the strongest effort he has made to heed human rights groups' calls to "break the silence" on the atrocities, said Eileen Sawyer of the Legal Resources Foundation, a lawyers' group that helped draft a report on army actions during the rebellion.

However, it was not clear how the government — which is mired in an economic crisis — would pay for compensation to the tens of thousands of potential claimants.

"What happened... caused a lot of suffering, some of which still persists today," Mugabe said during the church gathering in

Bulawayo. The city is the capital of western Matabeleland province, the scene of the 1982-1987 rebellion by 200 guerrilla fighters of the minority Ndebele tribe.

As many as 20,000 civilians died when Mugabe's troops tried to crush the rebellion, which began after Mugabe fired Ndebele leader Joshua Nkomo as minister of Home Affairs in 1982.

In a single two-week period, the soldiers killed 2,000 villagers in Matabeleland, according to the independent report compiled by the Roman Catholic Church and human

rights groups.

The war formally ended in 1988 when Nkomo signed a peace accord with Mugabe and joined the government as a vice president, the post he held until his death earlier this year.

For more than a decade, Mugabe brushed aside calls for restitution and refused to acknowledge the atrocities, describing the civilian victims as war casualties.

But at Nkomo's state funeral in July, Mugabe praised Nkomo's role in bringing the uprising to an end and apologized to his kinsmen for the actions of his troops.

WORLD BRIEFS

CHOLERA EPIDEMIC RAVAGES PORT LOKO IN SIERRA LEONE

PORT LOKO (IPS) — Sierra Leone's northwestern district of Port Loko has been hit by a cholera epidemic that is taking a serious toll on the local population. Health authorities told IPS that the deaths of more than 40 women and children have been recorded as a result of the outbreak. "The death toll is expected to rise because of the lack of pure drinking water and run down sanitary conditions in the area," said Clifford Gamanga, acting district medical and community health officer. "Taps and purified water sources were destroyed and the remaining population has been forced to depend on impure water fetched from shallow wells," said Gamanga. "During the fighting earlier this year, dozens of dead people were abandoned on the streets or buried in shallow graves and this may be another cause for the epidemic." Port Loko is situated about 115 kilometers northwest of the capital of Freetown and had been the scene of clashes between rebel and government forces during Sierra Leone's eight-year conflict. The situation has been further worsened by the sale of palm nut oil mixed with caustic soda by unscrupulous traders. Unable to afford palm oil or ordinary cooking oil, customers have resorted to buying the cheap and poisonous mixture.

WATCHDOG GROUP APPEALS FOR RELEASE OF ANGOLAN JOURNALIST

LUANDA (IPS) — An international media watchdog group has appealed to President Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola to release local journalist, William Tonet, who was picked up by the Angolan secret police in the capital of Luanda earlier this month. According to journalists at the bi-weekly Folha 8, the newspaper edited by Tonet, no charges have been filed against him since he was detained on Oct. 2. "We respectfully call on you to ensure that Mr. Tonet is immediately and unconditionally released from jail and that the harassment of him and his colleagues is halted," said Bengt Braun of the World Association of Newspapers, which represents more than 17,000 publications in 93 countries.

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