

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE  
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**

**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:**

Friday, 13 August 2004

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.

If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact

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## UNMIL Daily Media Summary

Thursday, 12 Aug 2004

### **Celebrations of Taylor's Political Party Ends in Violence**

*(The Inquirer and The New National)*

- Celebrations organized by the National Patriotic Party—the party of former President Charles Taylor—to mark one year of his exile ended in violence yesterday when a group of ex-combatants stormed the NPP office.
- The ex-combatants, who looted furniture, were seeking a share of the US\$1 million reportedly sent by Taylor for the celebrations.
- UN Civilian Police and other UNMIL forces swiftly moved in to control the situation.

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## African Union: Member states should urge Nigeria to surrender Charles Taylor to the Special Court on Sierra Leone

press release, 08/12/2004

As Liberians observe the first anniversary of Charles Taylor's flight into exile, Amnesty International expresses its dismay at a recent decision of the African Union's (AU) Executive Council congratulating Nigeria for granting him asylum.

"The AU's decision is a betrayal of the tens of thousands of African victims of the worst possible crimes imaginable, committed during the conflict in Sierra Leone," the organization said in an open letter to permanent representatives of members states of the AU.

Charles Taylor has been indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for "bearing the greatest responsibility" for crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law falling within the Special Court's jurisdiction and committed against African men, women and children. The crimes with which he is charged include killings, mutilations, rape and other forms of sexual violence, sexual slavery, conscription of children, abduction and forced labour perpetrated by Sierra Leone armed opposition forces with his active support as President of Liberia.

"The action by the Nigerian government in allowing Charles Taylor to enter Nigerian territory without threat of arrest and prosecution goes against the wish of the international community that impunity for crimes against humanity, war crimes and other grave crimes must come to an end," Amnesty International said. "It denies justice to tens of thousands of African victims of the worst possible crimes in the world and undermines the contribution of the Special Court towards achieving justice, reconciliation and sustained peace in Sierra Leone and the West Africa region."

"The decision not only shows contempt for African victims, it goes against the very values that led Africa to take the initiative to establish the Special Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, as well as to play a decisive role in the establishment of the International Criminal Court."

By condoning and endorsing the action of the Government of Nigeria, the AU's Executive Council has acted contrary to the Constitutive Act of the AU which commits all member states to cooperate in promoting and ensuring respect for human rights, democratic culture, good governance and the rule of law.

Furthermore, the AU's decision violates international law which requires that those responsible for crimes against humanity, war crimes and other breaches of international law be brought to justice.

In its decision on 31 May 2004, the Special Court for Sierra Leone upheld the principles of international justice and the rule of law by ruling that Charles Taylor has no immunity from prosecution for crimes against humanity and war crimes. This decision reinforces the need to ensure that he faces the serious charges against him.

"All member states of the AU should repudiate publicly the AU's decision on Liberia, urge the Government of Nigeria to cooperate fully with the Special Court by arresting Charles Taylor and surrendering him to the Court," Amnesty International said.

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**From The Balcony**

By Chernoh Alpha M. Bah

**Between Taylor and the United States**

Since the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone unsealed an indictment against former Liberian President Charles Taylor a year ago, when it was first made requesting the extradition to Sierra Leone, of former Liberian warlord to answer charges regarding his involvement in one of the world's most dangerous civil conflicts, Taylor is accused by the UN backed court of war crimes, crimes against humanity and of violating international humanitarian law. The former Liberian president, who was late last year ordered politically asylum by the Nigerian government under a peace deal brokered by Ecowas leaders, in Monrovia is currently residing in a mansion in Calabar in Nigeria.

The Special Court was established in 2002 under an agreement between the United Nations and the Sierra Leone government to try those who bear "the greatest responsibility" for crimes committed during the country's decade old conflict. Taylor is among those believed to bear the

greatest responsibility" for crimes committed during the country's conflict.

Several calls have been made for Nigeria to surrender Taylor to the court since the Special Court's Chief Prosecutor David Crane unsealed his indictment a year ago. Crane has argued that extraditing Taylor to Sierra Leone may serve as a major development in the fight against the beast of impunity. The Nigerian government has expressed disapproval in extraditing Taylor to Sierra Leone on the grounds that president Obasanjo's decision to offer Taylor sanctuary was based on the consent and approval of both the United States and Britain.

The United States in particular appears to be at the forefront in the campaign for Taylor's extradition. US president Bush has described Taylor's presence in Nigeria as a grave danger to American investment in Liberia and sustainable peace in the sub-region. What the United States actually means by this is yet an issue subject to debate. But the crux of the

matter is that the United States is presently doing everything humanly possible (including kidnapping Taylor from Calabar) to have him arraigned in front of American Prosecutor David Crane.

**Judging from the fact that Taylor was a CIA Informant, one may be tempted to believe that the United States may have sent him on a mission, realizing his disgruntlement against Doe, to seize power and secure American interests and investments in Monrovia, which he may have failed to do.**

The idea of bringing to book individuals who have committed the most heinous offenses against mankind appears laudable. But justice can only be enjoyed when it is absolutely transparent and free from fraud and suspicion. This is where jurisprudence takes its own pride and place. The idea of having Taylor and all others

appear before an international tribunal to account for their actions and involvement in Africa's most bloody conflict in recent times is a good one. But the question we ought to ask in the face of this development especially that of Taylor is to study the nature of

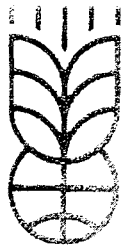
Taylor resurfaced, after he allegedly escaped from US prison, in the late 80s with an organized band of criminals in Butuo launching a guerilla campaign against the government of late Doe, which started a new era in the historical evolution of West Africa. After years of conflict, the same Taylor, whose rebellious campaign created mayhem in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, was elected President in an election monitored by Ecowas. The US authorities reported Taylor's escape from prison as late as 1997 after they discovered following his visit to France- that Taylor might have deviated from the supposed agreement he may have signed with the US prior to his rebellious crusade.

Can anyone imagine how ordinary Taylor at the time may have managed to escape from a fortified US prison? Judging from the fact that Taylor was a CIA Informant, one may be tempted to believe that the United States may have sent him on a mission, realizing his disgruntlement against Doe, to seize power and secure American interests and investments in Monrovia, which he may have failed to do. And because of this, mighty America is looking at every available opportunity to make the world believe that Taylor is far more evil and worst than George W. Bush. And in the face of these desperate efforts, the United States has completely succeeded in telling the world that any individual

trained by the CIA who chose to stay independent of the service of the US, will not witness peace in the world.

Osama Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, Avramovic, Taylor were all trained by the American CIA to destabilize the world. But today, US officials are making the world believe that their presence and evidence of a complete threat to safety to the world.

While not advancing a defense for war criminals, the fact of the matter is US efforts to have Taylor indicted to Sierra Leone is not based on any commitment to the protection of international humanitarian law neither is it geared towards bringing an end to impunity. Rather it is a calculated ploy by US officials to retaliate against a perceived violation of the United States. They want to use the Special Court as a smoke screen to achieve their devious intentions of the United States is committed to global peace and human rights, it would have signed the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court. The US is a major adherent to the maintenance of peace and human rights in the world. How would have Taylor being a tycoon in this sub region had the United States not released him from jail? So if we are to prosecute and try those who bear the "greatest responsibility" for crimes committed during the conflict, the United States should be the primary actor. That is where justice should start!



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## New Details Emerge about al-Qaida Connection to West Africa

Nico Colombant

Abidjan

11 Aug 2004, 15:25 UTC



- Listen to Nico Colombant's report (RealAudio)
- Colombant report - Download 637k (RealAudio)

More details emerged this week on the activities of al-Qaida in West Africa, especially in Liberia, where terrorists allegedly have been closely working with the government in the diamond trade.

The new information on al-Qaida is part of a report given to foreign media by the United Nations-backed war crimes court in Sierra Leone.

It is being described as a watered down version of what was given to the U.S. commission investigating the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States.

It details how half a dozen senior al-Qaida operatives worked closely with top officials in Liberia onwards from 1999 during the rule of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. It says they were basically given a safe haven to make illicit diamond deals.

Mr. Taylor, who left power last year in exchange for asylum in Nigeria, stands accused of having sold diamonds from rebels he backed in Sierra Leone until 2002. He has denied this and has refused to appear in court.

The head prosecutor in Freetown, David Crane, says his investigators easily traced back some of the illicit diamond trade to al-Qaida.

"When you place an international legal entity in a part of the world that has not really known the rule of law for many, many, many, years you're going to find all sorts of actors moving in and about what I would call a dark corner of the world and there are many of them and this just happens to be one," he said. "Certainly, al-Qaida have been here for a couple of years and they have been using diamonds to wash their money and so, yes, they certainly have a presence here. There's specific and direct evidence to that effect."

Mr. Crane says terrorists then easily re-sold smuggled diamonds.

Some investigators, from non-governmental groups like London-based Global Witness, believe al-Qaida's diamond proceeds, estimated at least \$15 million, helped finance the 2001 terrorist attacks.

The author of the recently released book *Blood from Stones: The Secret Financial Network of Terror*, former West Africa-based journalist Douglas Farah says the court's findings substantiate his own reporting.

He alleges U.S. intelligence neglected what was happening in Liberia, despite the close ties between the two countries.

"It's one of the things that is so embarrassing to the U.S intelligence community that there's one place in West Africa where they could've had a handle on events happening and should have had a handle of events, it was in Liberia but they essentially paid very little attention to Taylor and his multiple criminal activities for many years," he commented.

After years of civil war in Sierra Leone and then Liberia, it was, however, the U.S government who pushed for sanctions against Liberia and then demanded Mr. Taylor leave power a year ago.

U.N. peacekeeping operations in both Liberia and Sierra Leone seem to leave little room for the terrorists to maneuver for now.

But Mr. Farah thinks al-Qaida operatives could move to nearby areas in West Africa, which remain essentially lawless.

"You have most of the Congo which is not occupied by a state, you have much of Mauritania, Chad, Niger and even parts of Ivory Coast which are now no longer really under state control," he said. "It's in those gray areas, those stateless areas where it's so easy to hide, where intelligence gathering is so difficult, that they can use easily as their rear-guard areas and I think they will be increasingly exploiting those as they become pressured in their more traditional areas."

Diamonds are not everywhere, however, and a new certification system tries to prevent the sale of precious gems from conflict areas, making illicit trading more difficult.


In Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania, four vast, largely uncontrolled countries described as possible rest and recovery areas for terrorists, the U.S. military has started anti-terrorism training with national armies. Some analysts say these countries are cooperating because they are getting free training and equipment, and not because they are committed to eradicating possible terrorist threats.


Emmanuel Sowatey from the Ghana-based African Security Dialogue and Research group says most governments in the region have more pressing matters to deal with than terrorists.

"The threat of terrorism, because it's not as strong as the instabilities being spread in the sub-region by rag-tag armies, you know rebel forces, the issue of terrorism is not as important as dealing with the Ivorian crisis, trying to strengthen democracies in our countries," he said.

Mr. Sowatey points out the region itself has not been a target of attacks, but that this could change as more and more of the world's oil comes from West Africa.

Analysts interviewed for this report also fear future African terrorists could be spurred on by hard-line Islamic clerics who have been setting up mosques, charities and schools throughout impoverished Muslim areas in West Africa.

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### An Update on Sierra Leone's War Crimes Tribunal

The Tavis Smiley Show audio

Aug. 12, 2004

An international war crimes tribunal is taking place in the African nation of Sierra Leone -- a legal proceeding all but unnoticed by most of the outside world. NPR's Tony Cox talks with Elise Keppler, a lawyer for the International Justice Program of Human Rights Watch, and Raymond Brown and Wanda Akin Brown, two lawyers defending one of three military leaders charged with committing war crimes during that nation's civil war.

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