

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of the latest local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:

Monday, August 16, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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Standard Times

Monday, August 16, 2009

MP calls for 'Norman's Release' campaign

BY ABDUL KUYATEH

Hon. Member of Parliament for the Kenema district, Dr. Francis Momoh last week made a public appeal for the immediate release of former deputy defence minister and national coordinator of the Kamajoi

militia who took part in the rebel war.

Speaking in an apparently strong tone, Dr. Momoh said that he was sending a message to the Special Court prosecutor, David Crane, to "leave our man, Hinga Norman, because it burns us

Norman did nothing. He drove away the destructive forces."

Making reference to the UNDP community based reconciliation, in which occasion the Hon. member was speaking, Dr. Momoh said, "if the rebels had not

killed, we would not have had occasion to celebrate a mass grave."

He therefore urged the project financiers and implementing agencies (IRC-SL and TRC), to quickly transform themselves into an advocacy campaign group for the release of Chief Sam Hinga Norman, who is facing eight count charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and others at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

He said that the continued ar-

rest and incarceration of Chief Sam Hinga Norman would discourage others in future from displaying the courage that is necessary to bring about meaningful changes in society.

Present at the occasion was a cross section of the executive of IRC-SL, UNDP senior governance advisor, Ms. Sylvia Fletcher, as well as chieftain and district authorities.

UNMIL Daily Media Summary
Friday, 13 Aug 2004

Nigeria to Lift Taylor's Asylum

(The Evidence)

- *The Evidence*, quoting "confirmed sources," reports that the Nigerian Government has begun preliminary hearings on the asylum granted to former President Charles Taylor.
- The paper further reports that the United Nations and the United States government have instructed the Nigerian government to lift the asylum on Mr. Taylor so that he can be tried at the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

Amnesty urges Nigeria to surrender Taylor



Charles Taylor, fugitive

By Chernoh Alpha M. Bah
Amnesty International has called on African Union (AU) member states to urge Nigeria surrender

Charles Taylor to the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

This call was made in a Press Release issued Friday by the International Secretariat of the organization expressing dismay

over a recent decision made by the African Union Executive Council congratulating the government of Obasanjo for granting asylum to the former Liberian warlord.

"The AU's decision is a betrayal of the tens of thousands of African victims of the worst possible crimes committed during the conflict in Sierra Leone," the organization said in an open letter to Permanent Representatives of

AU member states.

Amnesty International says the action by the Nigerian government to allow Taylor enter Nigerian territory without threat of arrest and prosecution is against the wish of the International Community to end impunity.

The organization called on AU member states to publicly repudiate the decision of the

Continued page 3

Amnesty urges Nigeria

From page 1

African Union on Liberia and urge the government of Nigeria to cooperate with the Special Court by arresting and surrendering Taylor to the Court.

Charles Taylor was

indicted by the Special Court for "bearing the greatest responsibility" for crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law committed during Sierra Leone decade old conflict.

Concord Times

August 16, 2004

08/13/2004 16:54:08

Report links al-Qaida to diamond trade ; Terror suspects dealt with Liberian

EDWARD HARRIS ; Associated Press

A series of witnesses place six top al-Qaida fugitives in Africa buying up diamonds before the Sept. 11 attacks, according to a confidential report by U.N.-backed prosecutors obtained by the Associated Press.

The first-person accounts detailed by the prosecutors add to long-standing claims that al-Qaida laundered millions of dollars in terror funds through African diamonds.

Al-Qaida figures, including some already wanted in pre-Sept. 11 attacks on U.S. targets, dealt directly with President Charles Taylor and other leaders and warlords in the West African country of Liberia beginning in 1999, according to the accounts. The witnesses told of meetings and sightings in the seedy hotels and safehouses of Monrovia, Liberia's capital.

Al-Qaida's alleged aim was to buy diamonds to have easily convertible, untraceable resources after the first U.S.-led moves freezing al-Qaida bank accounts and other conventional assets worldwide in 1999.

U.S. officials and the intelligence community are split over the quantity and quality of the evidence of claims of al-Qaida's Africa diamond links.

The report, apparently prepared by U.N.-backed investigators for presentation recently to the Sept. 11 commission and other officials in Washington, moves the matter forward. It shows that sources interviewed by prosecutors are corroborating accounts of links between al-Qaida and West Africa.

08/15/2004 12:06:54

UK to fund 'security advisers' for Sierra Leone

By Clayton Hirst, INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

Britain is to pay for a private security firm to provide intelligence training and advice to Sierra Leone, the West African country slowly recovering from a 10-year civil war.

The revelation will raise fresh questions over the Government's close relationship with the security firms after the Sandline arms-to-Africa scandal.

The Department for International Development (DfID) is offering a 12-month contract to provide "intelligence and security advice" to the government of Sierra Leone, headed by President Ahmad Kabbah.

As well as training, the winning firm will work "at the highest level" with the country's new security service and even draft an official secrets act.

Security industry sources said Control Risks, Erinys International and Aegis Defence Services are possible bidders.

A bid from Aegis would embarrass the Government. The company is headed by Col Tim Spicer, the former Scots Guard who was at the centre of the arms-to-Africa affair. His former company, Sandline International, tried to smuggle arms to forces in Sierra Leone in 1998 in contravention of a UN arms embargo and in apparent collusion with the Foreign Office.

A spokeswoman for Mr Spicer refused to say if Aegis would bid for the contract in Sierra Leone. A DfID spokeswoman said: "All applications will be judged on their own merits."

Jonathan Garratt, the managing director of Erinys International, said: "Any decision to tender would only be made once our ethics committee has reviewed the requirement." Control Risks declined to comment.

The contract is part of the DfID's attempts to reconstruct the country after the civil war, which left 50,000 dead. The department has provided pounds 104.5m in aid in the past three years. British troops in the country are credited with maintaining the fragile peace.

But the DfID's decision to turn to private security firms has worried some politicians. Liberal Democrat MP Norman Lamb wrote to the Secretary of State for International Development, Hilary Benn, on Friday asking him to provide "full disclosure" over the contract.

"Security is key to Sierra Leone as development can only happen if it has the basic security in place," he said. "But [the use of the firms] does raise concerns and at the very least I would want a proper explanation and justification of this."

The Government is coming under pressure over its reliance on private security firms as part of its foreign peace-keeping missions. Up to 15,000 "mercenaries" are thought to be working in Iraq. But some foreign security firms have been accused of involvement in the abuse of Iraqi prisoners.

The Foreign Office published a Green Paper two years ago on regulating mercenaries but firm proposals have not followed.



Between Taylor And the United States

Concord Times (Freetown)

OPINION

August 13, 2004

Posted to the web August 13, 2004

By Chernoh Alpha M. Bah
Freetown

Since the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone unsealed an indictment against former Liberian President Charles Taylor a year ago, much noise has been made requesting the extradition, to Sierra Leone, of the former Liberian warlord to answer charges regarding his involvement in one of Africa'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 offered political asylum by the Nigerian government under a peace deal brokered by Ecomog leaders in Ghana, is currently residing in a mansion in Calabar, Nigeria.

The Special Court was established in 2002 under an agreement between the United Nations and the Sierra Leone government to try all 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 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 describes Taylor's presence in Nigeria as a grave danger to American investments 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.

The idea of bringing to book individuals who have committed the most heinous offences 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 the conflict itself and the individuals believed to bear "the greatest responsibility" in all that transpired during that period. I'm not trying to put up a defense for indicted war-crimes suspect Charles Taylor, but looking at the whole issue and the level of America's involvement in the affair categorically makes one to believe that the United States wants to use the Court as

an " organized witch hunt" to track down a one time corporate of theirs for violating an agreement brokered during the late 1980s.

Taylor, a former CIA Informant and a serving Minister in the government of late Samuel Doe, fled to the United States after he was accused of financial embezzlement. He was arraigned, under the instruction of the Liberian government, by US officials, tried and convicted, and sent to jail in Massachuset.

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 evolvment 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, Arafat and Taylor were all trained by the American CIA to destabilize the world. But today, US officials are making the world to believe that their presence and existence is a complete threat to sanity in 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 its 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 traitor of the United States. They want to use the Special Court as a smoke screen to achieve their devious intentions. If 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 deterrent to the maintenance of peace and human dignity in the world. How would have Taylor being a tyrant 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 our conflict, the United States should be the primary target. That is where justice should start!

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Al-Qaida's diamonds are for never

Posted: August 13, 2004
1:00 a.m. Eastern

Editor's note: Mike Evans' new book, "The American Prophecies," topped best-seller charts even before its release, knocking Bill Clinton's "My Life" off the No. 2 spot on Amazon before ascending to No. 1. In his book, Evans explores current events in the light of ancient Scriptures and America's place in biblical prophecy.

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The capture of leading al-Qaida terrorists in Pakistan last month is shedding light on a murderous money trail that stretched from West Africa to the United States long before 9-11 - and still exists today. It is a trail strewn with diamonds.

On July 25, Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani - with a U.S. bounty of \$25 million on his head - was arrested in Pakistan, along with more than a dozen fellow al-Qaida agents. He is being held for the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. More than 200 people, including 12 Americans, were murdered and some 5,000 wounded in the attacks.

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According to reports from Pakistan (Boston Globe, Aug. 4, 2004), for at least three years following the embassy bombings, Ghailani, a Tanzanian in his early 30s, lived in an army

camp and hotels run by Liberia's now deposed strongman, Charles Taylor. Ghailani and his accomplices joined Taylor in the trade in "blood diamonds" - diamonds mined and sold illicitly by rebel groups or terrorist organizations to finance wars and terrorism - raising millions of dollars for al-Qaida, according to U.N. war crimes documents.

The trade has expanded. According to congressional testimony by U.S. Gen. Charles Wald, deputy commander of the European Central Command (Washington Post, Aug. 3, 2004), al-Qaida and its affiliates have been buying up diamonds for months now in Mauritania, Mali, Chad and Niger.

Incredibly, despite Wald's warnings, most of the U.S. intelligence community - principally the CIA - until recently dismissed the reports. Taylor's ties to al-Qaida have since been corroborated by the FBI and the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is investigating crimes against humanity during that country's civil war.

The Globe also reported that the Defense Department approved a Special Forces raid to capture al-Qaida leaders under Taylor's protection in 2001, but called it off. Taylor, who was deposed last year, is living in exile in Nigeria under a deal brokered by the United States.

"We have in the process of investigating Charles Taylor ... clearly uncovered that he harbored al-Qaida operatives in Monrovia as late as the summer of 2001," David Crane, the court's lead prosecutor, was quoted as saying by the Associated Press (June 1, 2004). "The central thread is blood diamonds."

Hezbollah has also been exploiting the corrupt governments of West Africa to finance its terrorist operations. According to the Post, "They use areas such as West Africa to finance their activities, correctly betting that Western intelligence services do not have the capacity, resources, or interest to track their activities

there ... Hezbollah has been using diamonds from West Africa to finance its activities since its inception, successfully embedding its financial structure in the diamond trade. Al-Qaida operatives plugged into the same network, bridging the divide between Shiite and Sunni Muslims."

The move from dollars to diamonds dates from the aftermath of the embassy bombings, according to the Post, when the U.S. government froze some \$220 million in Taliban and al-Qaida gold deposited in the Federal Reserve. In response, al-Qaida switched from banks to the ever-liquid commodity of diamonds. According to a March 2003 report by Global Witness, a non-governmental organization that investigates the trade in blood diamonds, Osama bin Laden's personal secretary was deeply involved in this trade.

The U.N. investigation found that Ghailani was sent to Liberia to coordinate al-Qaida's diamond trade along with al-Qaida comrades Fazhl Abdullah Muhammad, Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah and Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan. All are wanted for the embassy bombings and are on the FBI's list of most wanted terrorists.

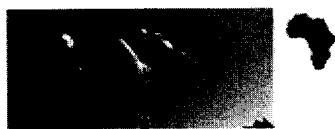
According to the U.N. probe, published by the Associated Press, "The corrupt regime of President Charles Taylor of Liberia facilitated access for al-Qaida operatives into Sierra Leone and Liberia in exchange for diamonds and weapons."

The Globe quoted a U.S. intelligence official who corroborated the U.N.'s main findings, saying, "Charles Taylor was in the back pocket of al-Qaida." He added that Taylor was paid at least \$1 million by al-Qaida for his trouble.

"For some reason our intelligence people have been very anxious to disprove this as happening, something that can't be disproved," said Joseph Melrose, U.S. ambassador to Sierra Leone until September 2001. After meeting with war crimes investigators in February 2004, the FBI finally concluded that al-Qaida

had extensive ties to Taylor and his armed forces, the U.N. investigators said. This conclusion came about three years too late: Al-Qaida's diamond purchases were first reported in the Washington Post in November 2001.

There were "missed opportunities" in the late 1990s, and in the months after 9-11 to dismantle al-Qaida's blood diamonds operation in Africa, U.S. officials are quoted by the Globe as saying. One of them might have prevented Muhammad from masterminding al-Qaida's suicide bombing attack on a seaside hotel in Mombasa, Kenya, in November 2002 in which three Israelis and 10 Kenyans were murdered - and an attempt to shoot down an Israeli airliner taking off from Mombasa the same day.



For up to the minute sports.



More Revelation On Al Qaeda-Liberia Links

The Analyst (Monrovia)

NEWS

August 12, 2004

Posted to the web August 12, 2004

Money Laundering Highlighted

Until recently, Charles Taylor's direct links with the notorious al-Qaeda terrorist movement was considered part of international conspiracy to discredit and topple his government. Taylor himself alluded to such scheme and did not only call for proof from his accusers but also proffered to help the Bush administration bring al-Qaeda suspects to justice.

Just last week, US and UN officials in the West African subregion spoke of Taylor's personal participation in the al-Qaeda West African blood diamonds hoax and disclosed plans to extradite him for trial. But even then, skepticism amongst observers remained high. But as The Analyst Staff Writer reports, more and more witnesses have come up with fresh evidences that bind Taylor, blood diamonds, and al-Qaeda's West African ring of money laundering in preparation for the bombings of the September 11, 2001 in the US.

"Top al-Qaeda terrorists were sheltered by former Liberian warlord Charles Taylor while he built up a war chest from trading in diamonds," UN prosecutors in Sierra Leone claimed in a recent report that is yet to be released.

The report said al-Qaeda paid Taylor for protection and lived under his shield for more than five years, at a military camp near the border with Sierra Leone, in government-run hotels in the capital of Monrovia and at one of Taylor's residences in Congo town.

Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, one al-Qaeda operative who hitherto had a US\$25 million bounty on his head and only recently arrested in Pakistan, according to the report, was hidden out in Liberian military camps from late 1998 until shortly before Taylor was forced to step down.

Further evidence of al-Qaeda's growing presence in Africa lies in a dossier prepared by UN prosecutors at the special war crimes court in Sierra Leone, which has indicted Liberian strongman, Taylor in absentia.

They claimed that from September 1998 to late 2002 or early 2003, six of the FBI's "most wanted," including Ghailani, amassed an estimated US\$15 million from trade in diamonds to finance terror operations.

The Associated Press, in a dispatch Tuesday this week, quoted a "confidential report" by UN-backed prosecutors in Sierra Leone as saying that a series of witnesses placed six top al-Qaeda fugitives in Africa buying up diamonds before the September 11 attacks on the United States.

It said during al-Qaeda's operations in Liberia, millions of United States dollars were laundered in terror funds before launching its deadliest offensive that rocked the heart of America's security citadel - the

Pentagon.

"Al-Qaeda figures, including those already wanted in pre-September 11 attacks on U.S. targets, dealt directly with Liberia's former President Charles Taylor and other leaders and warlords in what was then a rogue West African nation from 1999 onwards, according to witness accounts of meetings and sightings in the blighted Liberian capital's seedy hotels and safe-houses," the AP dispatch said.

The account said that al-Qaeda was attracted to West Africa, mainly war-ravaged Liberia, because it provided cover for the off-hand opportunity to "snap up diamonds for easily convertible, untraceable resources after the first US-led moves in 1999 froze al-Qaeda bank accounts and other conventional assets worldwide."

"Witnesses say Liberia's former President Taylor himself gave al-Qaeda operatives entry to the shady West African world of guns, cash and diamonds before September 11, according to the dossier," the AP dispatch noted.

It said having paid for protection, ex-president Taylor allegedly brought rebels, state leaders and Islamic extremists under the common goal of cash and introduced them to rebels controlling fine-gem mining next door, in diamond-rich Sierra Leone, it quoted sources as telling investigators.

The dispatch however noted that those that were making the link between Taylor and al-Qaeda charged that the US government had turned its back on the case in part over discomfort over the CIA's own alleged Cold War-era links to Taylor.

In another development, Liberians residing in the US State of Minnesota have vowed to add to efforts already being made to send Taylor to Sierra Leone for prosecution.

They vowed to fight the culture of impunity in Liberia by ensuring that Mr. Taylor is tried before the special court in Sierra Leone.

"Impunity for Taylor is an affront to the thousands of victims and their families who are our neighbors. Only when he is brought to justice will members of Minnesota's West African community be able to truly begin the difficult task of rebuilding their lives, confident in the knowledge that those who wrought destruction will not do so again," they said in a release that coincided with the first anniversary of Taylor's exile.

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UNITY

Monday, August 16, 2009

Yenga, The Present Story!

WITH DR. SAMA BANYA

Among the things that give me pleasure is to see someone who is given an assignment takes his task very seriously, performs diligently so that even his fiercest critics cannot help but give him credit. Not that our critics are prone to give praise even where it is due.

There has recently been a lot of comments about the situation in Yenga. Not only that the Guineans had seized our territory but that they had put our people there under occupation as if they were citizens of a recently defeated and subdued state. There have been stories of the Guineans appropriating farmlands and preventing our Yenga people from cultivating it. We have also read, and this quite recently, that the inhabitants of Yenga were the victims of a 6 pm-to-dawn curfew and were not allowed to go near the river Moa which separates our two countries. Finally, that those poor people now have to pay Taxes to the Guinean authorities. George Banda-Thomas our Minister of Internal Affairs has visited Guinea where he held discussions with his Guinean counterpart. Not unexpectedly Yenga featured prominently in those discussions and on his return home Mr. Banda-Thomas gave a news conference. In addition he was interviewed on SLBS Radio.

Who will deny that his presentation was at once detailed, revealing, informative and reassuring? It included a film of the area which shows the relevant landmarks. The logic of the Minister's presentation even in the absence of the 1912 survey map could not have left even the most skeptical of us in any doubt that, "yes, indeed Yenga is Sierra Leone

territory."

What I also liked about that presentation was the information that contrary to what our armchair critics have been saying and writing, the SLPP Government has been pushing the Yenga issue in the normal Government to Government way, in this case, two very friendly Governments.

Those notwithstanding some of our friends remains skeptical and keep harping about sugar-coated words; what this implies is that such people want action. Again one is compelled to ask, but what kind of action, go to war? I am

sure they can't really mean that and this brings me to the point that I have always raised about some of our columnists, the kind who write as if they have the interest of this country more than the rest of us. I would have thought that after George Banda-Thomas's presentation, the general feeling is that the joint committee would meet soon to settle this matter, hopefully once for all. But then as we are all aware the Yenga issue keeps coming back like a recurring decimal point.

In spite of Mr. George Banda-Thomas's news conference together with the recent government release, an editorial of a local paper has had this to say "while everybody is desperate to know what is happening regarding the situation in Yenga, the government is keeping a sealed lip on the development or shortfalls in the



Territory."

whole affair." This prompts me to recall my former landlady's favourite expression: "Well, I never!"

But we must not get weary of this matter, after all Gibraltar became British some three hundred years ago. At the outset Britain and Spain must have gone to war over that tiny peace of land, with its very narrow strait, which separates Africa from Europe. But since that time the two countries have only continued to argue and to negotiate about who owns it. George Banda-Thomas in his presentation also reminded us about the position of the OAU, now the African Union, on the question of Colonial boundaries between African States and which often had the habit of separating members of the same ethnic community into francophone or Anglophone.



When President Tejan Kabbah was in Koindu last February a mixed delegation of Guineans came over to Koindu to pay their respects. Early in this article I have referred to arm-chair critics. I have been wondering where these people get their information and whether the intention is not to cause panic even as they write as if they had just returned from Yenga. Not long ago a journalist claimed to have visited Yenga where he interviewed some of the inhabitants. As far as I understood it that interview took place in Yenga itself. I have repeated often that contrary to the views of some of our critics, ours is a caring Government and would never be stampeded into actions which can only bring problems for our people. It is those who would do otherwise who really don't care for the welfare and safety of our people. Yes dear readers, this Government will continue to "jaw jaw jaw" instead of "war, war, war."