

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:

Friday, March 11, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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Torture Of AFRC Fighters In Kamajor Camp Revealed

By Mohamed Mansaray

Special Court prosecution witness, Albert Moinina Nallo told the court yesterday that five captured AFRC/RUF fighters were tortured to death at Base Zero, Yawboko chiefdom in the Bonthe district by a group he described as the Death Squad between 1997 and 1998.

He said that the Death Squad was answerable only to Mr. Norman and did most of the killings at the base. Mr. Nallo was testifying

about Kamajor activities in the Southern region during that period. He was led in evidence by a prosecution lawyer, Kevin Travener at

Court Room No.1, New England in Freetown.

"I was personally involved in killing people at Base Zero but I did it on the orders of the first accused. Mr. Norman," Mr. Nallo told the court.

Describing himself as the



Norman

Witness: 'Norman Ordered Me To Kill'

former National Deputy Director of Operations in the Southern region, the witness told the court that a Kamajor by the name of Mustapha Fallon from Cartie village was beheaded in the 'Poro' bush at Base Zero for ritual purposes. He told the court that the deceased was murdered on the orders of the third accused Allieu Kondewa to perform a sacrifice to enable Kamajors to capture Koribondo from junta forces. "Mustapha's body was burnt and the ashes and the liver cooked with some herbs by Kondewa. All of us ate it and took an oath never to reveal the secret to the deceased relatives," Mr. Nallo testified and added that Mr. Norman gave Le300,000 to the deceased's brothers, Sheku Massaquoi and Muniru Rogers not to leak the secret to any body.

Born at Upper Siama, Lugbu Chiefdom, Bo district, Mr. Nallo testified that they also killed one Alpha Dauda Kanu, a Kapra, at an oil palm plant nation around Base Zero in order to make what the witness referred to as a garment and walking stick that would make the first accused, Hinga Norman more powerful.

The former deputy Kamajor Director went on to testify that he led a five-man Kamajor team to murder a Fullah man at Baoma Kpenge village, a famous trade fair center in the Bonthe district, accusing him of being a junta collaborator. He told the court that the Fullah man was shot dead behind a school building in the town and four cartons of cigarettes looted from him.

Giving his testimony openly in Krio through an interpreter, Mr. Nallo quoted the first accused as ordering him to raid

certain villages in Jong chiefdom, Bonthe district, where according to the witness junta collaborators and sympathisers were in hiding.

According to the witness, he was accompanied by two Kamajors, Momoh Penba and Billo Conteh who were assigned to him by the Director of War Moinima Fofana to show him the terrain. Mr. Nallo told the court that the villagers had abandoned the village before they arrived but that they nevertheless succeeded in persuading them to return to the village from the bushes.

"As soon as the people to town we accused them of being rebels and opened fire on them killing over fifteen," Mr. Nallo testified.

The witness further told the court that he and other Kamajors also visited Sorgia in the Bonthe district during that period for similar reasons and murdered an old woman after she (deceased) identified herself with one Joseph Lansana who was being tortured by the Kamajors, accusing him of being secretary for the RUF rebels. The witness added that the deceased's compound was set ablaze and her body thrown in the raging fire after she had been chopped.

Mr. Nallo also testified that Joseph Lansana was not killed but that his ear was cut off and subjected to various forms torture.

"I carried out all these operations on the orders of Mr. Norman," the witness emphasised and stated that he would have his leg broken or ear cut off or even killed if he had not carried out the order.

The trials continue.

AT THE SPECIAL COURT Avondor, another heinous Kamajor

society

AT THE UN Special Court in Sierra Leone, a witness, TF 2-014 Albert Moinina Jusu Nallo, told the court how people were initiated into another Kamajor society called AVONDOR.

by SU THORONKA

This society, the witness said was founded by Doctor Aliu Kondowa with the fol-

The skin of the initiate was cut and the Tevi rubbed as a protection from danger, the witness

Norman went to sell cassava from his village, Ngolala.

"Hunters were all over the country before the war, and that their activities were limited to hunting animals in the bush.

"These hunters were under the control of the various chiefs in their lo-

Lagbeyor of Komboya chiefdom in Bo district.

"We however had a fracas with the soldiers and Chief Lagbeyor was subsequently killed by the them.

"After the death of Lagbeyor, all the chiefs in the Southern Province unanimously chose Sam Hinga Norman as the chairman of the Kamajor movement at which time Norman was the deputy minister of Defence and Regent Chief in the Jaima Bongor chiefdom,

Witness TF2-014 said the Kamajors had another base in Kpa at Mama Fortune's place.

"They made road blocks in Gerehun. The AFRC sent PC JK Boima, Professor Tommy Bayoh who was a Kamajor, late Prince Brima, the BBC reporter, to prevail on them to join the AFRC.

"After 300 of the Kamajors had assembled, they noticed that these people brought some AFRC

war front from the Director Moinina Fofanah to Hinga Norman; collect arms and ammunition for distribution to various fronts; visit frontline and give an assessment of the moral of fighters; and jointly plan with Moinina on war strategies.

At Base Zero, the witness said, Chief Hinga Norman declared all AFRC/RUF fighters and their sym-

following as members of its cabinet: Sheku Bombowai, Kamo Boni, Kamo Fouad, Gibrilla, CO Mokosie, Halinyama and Woody.

Intending initiates go between queues of people on both sides and whilst going through, they were beaten mercilessly, the witness said.

However, he said, if in the process one falls down without completing the course, that person was said to have fallen into an ambush and he was then taken to a secluded place where he is tortured to death and finally burnt to ashes.

The ashes was collected by the initiator and mixed with other herbs to make what the witness referred to as Tevi in Mende.

narrated.

He said because the Paramount Chief of Sogbeni chiefdom, PC Steven Wani Bio, did not favour the said initiation, so he had to drive Aliu Kondowa and his group from the town of Tihun.

The fifty-one year old witness who speaks the following languages: Mende, Krio, Kissi, Kuranko, Madingo and English, said he attended school up to form five and later proceeded to Njala University College where he pursued a Certificate course in Agriculture.

"I took up appointment as an Agricultural Instructor (AI) and later joined the Anglican Mission as a development officer before the war.

"I came to know Chief Sam Hinga Norman at a place called Mugemeh area in Bo where

calities and whenever a hunter killed an animal, the leg was given to the chief as a sign of gratitude," the witness testified.

The Kamajor fighting, he said, started from 1993-94 by one Dr Alpha Lavalie, a university lecturer at Njala.

The witness said he joined the Kamajor military in late November 1996 through the recommendation of his Paramount Chief in Bo as that was the normal procedure before it was later commercialized.

"I was later initiated by the sowe called Mama Munda Fortune in Bo, after which myself and others were taken to a rebel camp in Bonthe.

"We fought along side the Sierra Leone Army and the head of the Kamajor at the time was late Chief Lebbie

Bo district," he said.

The Kamajors, he continued, went into the bush immediately Tejan Kabbah was overthrown while some in Bo mounted road blocks, those in Pujehun went to Bo Waterside led by Eddie Masallay who spoke through the BBC, calling upon all the hunters in the country to take up arms to flush the AFRC.

He further told the court that he was with a group of Kamajors in Gerehun while Chief Sam Hinga Norman was in the Republic of Guinea, but a week later, he said, Norman returned to the country and joined the Kamajors at Jendema.

Eddie Masallay then relinquished his position when Norman took over as National Co-ordinator, he added.

fighters with them, so the Kamajors opened fire and killed both Professor Tommy and Bayoh but PC Boima and Prince Brima were captured and later released.

"We then left Kpa where we spent two months, he said.

Before they left Kpa for Tihun Sogbeni chiefdom, the witness said, Norman appointed Moinina Fofanah as Director of Operations.

At Base Zero, the witness said, he was appointed by Chief Sam Hinga Norman as deputy National Director of Operations covering Bo, Moyamba and Pujehun.

His role, he said, was to take instructions and directives from the National Chairman, Chief Norman, to the various areas in the war front; collect report from the

pathizers, collaborators and those who refuse to leave the AFRC/RUF occupied zones as enemies.

"Hinga Norman warned us not to spare them, as we had no food or shelter for them and therefore they should be killed.

"Hinga Norman approved the looting of property owned by the categories of people named. He made this pronouncement in the presence of the war council," the witness stated.

He said whilst they were at Base Zero, five-captured AFRC men were handed over to the 'Death Squad' who tortured them to death.

"The 'Death Squad' was only answerable to Hinga Norman," the witness concluded.

Concord Times, 11th March, 2005. (Friday)

Special Court witness threatened

By Abdul Karim Kororma

Special Court witness, TF1-002 who is testifying in the ongoing AFRC trial alleged Tuesday that she was threatened by two ladies on her way home after court.

She says the two called her real name and threatened to deal with her.

Special Court Judge, Richard Lussick disclosed Wednesday that the matter has been referred to Special Court Registrar, Robin Vincent for investigation.

Special Court Spokesman, Peter Anderson says it is

Special Court Witness

From page 1.

unknown on whose indictment's behalf was the threat made.

"But the court takes issues relating to the safety and

well-being of any witness very seriously," he said, adding, "I can't speak further because the investigations are ongoing."

Jailed Australian granted bail in Sierra Leone

10 Mar 2005 13:26:58 GMT

Source: Reuters

FREETOWN, March 10 (Reuters) - A court in Sierra Leone has granted bail to an Australian war crimes investigator while he appeals his conviction for indecently assaulting a teenage girl in the West African country.

Peter Halloran, who was on secondment to the U.N.-backed special court investigating crimes during Sierra Leone's civil war, was sentenced to 18 months in jail last month. He has denied all the charges against him.

The bail ruling was made on Wednesday in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown, where Halloran has been in prison.

Judge John Muria said bail was granted on condition that Halloran surrender his passport, pay a surety of around \$4,000 and agree to check in with police in Freetown every day.

"Halloran has been granted bail," Muria told the court.

In January, Halloran was cleared of raping the 14-year-old girl in the same case.

Sierra Leone's special court was set up to bring to justice those most responsible for a 10-year war which shocked the world with images of drugged-up young gunmen and mutilated victims.

The allegations against Halloran, an Australian police officer, came from another Australian investigator who shared a house with him in Freetown.

The special court suspended Halloran last June after it became aware of the allegations against him, but an internal inquiry found insufficient evidence to support them.

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It's not just a place on the map.



A Courageous Stand

Liberian Observer (Monrovia)

PRESS RELEASE

March 10, 2005

Posted to the web March 10, 2005

Monrovia

A profile of 2005 Reebok Human Rights Award Winner, Aloysius Toe of Liberia.

Aloysius Toe, Age 27:

One of Liberia's leading activists since 1996, Aloysius Toe has taken courageous stances on critical human rights issues, advocated against abuses, and educated Liberians about their rights.

Those rights have been brutally undermined since 1989, when Liberia was engulfed in the first of two civil wars. The first war ended with the election of former warlord Charles Taylor as president, but Taylor's rule soon became characterized by political killings, arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, and deteriorating social conditions. The second war broke out in 2000 when rebels fought to unseat Taylor. Again, all sides perpetrated egregious human rights violations against civilians, including rape, summary execution, forced recruitment, widespread use of child combatants, displacement, looting, and banditry. With Taylor now exiled, the interim government is trying to rebuild a devastated nation.

"After such war and brutality our country needs to live in peace. Our country needs to enjoy reconciliation. But reconciliation cannot be achieved by turning a blind eye to issues of justice. Can we provide justice for victims of human rights abuses while at the same time creating conditions that will not lead to renewed conflict? That is our hope."

Aloysius began his activism as a teenager, when he found himself surrounded by turmoil. Armed forces were arresting innocent people, including a sixteen-year-old girl whose only crime was being from the wrong ethnic group. Despite the protestation of Aloysius and his fellow students, the soldiers executed the girl. "It was like my soul was boiling within me," Aloysius says. "I could not stand by and simply watch what was happening."

From 1996 to 1999, Aloysius directed the Movement for the Defense of Human Rights, organizing 110 human rights clubs, raising awareness of the abuses of the Taylor government, and promoting human rights education within the Liberian school system. He also organized a network of 245 community-based human rights volunteers in rural communities to monitor and report violations. His leadership helped expose and challenge the practice of forced labor on Taylor's farms. In 2001, he led non-violent protests against the politically motivated murders of student demonstrators and a prominent community leader. When he spoke out against the atrocities committed by Taylor's son, he was arrested and imprisoned. After his release, he continued to protest human rights violations.

The most dramatic test of his courage came not long after. He was in hiding when, in an apparent assassination attempt, armed government operatives raided his home in the middle of the night, held a pistol to his wife's head, tossed her in the back of a pickup, and hauled her off to jail. Although their small children were left alone, neighbors were too afraid to leave their own homes to come to the children's aid. Rather than flee the country and leave his family vulnerable to retribution, Aloysius turned himself in to authorities. He was charged with treason and imprisoned for eight months. He escaped when Taylor's regime collapsed.

It was then that Aloysius realized his role as a human rights leader had only just begun. A lack of infrastructure, huge numbers of displaced people, and desperate levels of poverty have together sparked a further crisis for Liberia. The interim government must disarm, retrain, and provide meaningful work for more than 40,000 former combatants, including some 15,000 children. Hundreds of thousands of civilians must be reintegrated into their towns and villages. The army and national police must be revamped and retrained. And the crumbling, looted infrastructure of hospitals, schools, and courts must be rebuilt.

Aloysius realized that most of the Liberian organizations working on human rights were focused on civil and political rights. Little or no work was done on social and economic rights - and the widespread, crushing poverty made the entire country vulnerable. So in 2003 he established the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy, Liberia's first nongovernmental organization concerned with social, cultural, and economic justice. He now works on transitional justice issues to ensure that human rights are central to the peace process in postwar Liberia. As part of that mission, he is involved in a campaign to bring former president Taylor to trial in a special court in Sierra Leone.

"I dream of one day being able to sleep in peace in my own home, in my own country," Aloysius says. "And I dream that one day we'll be regarded as a dignified people, as a country with direction, as a country with national spirit."

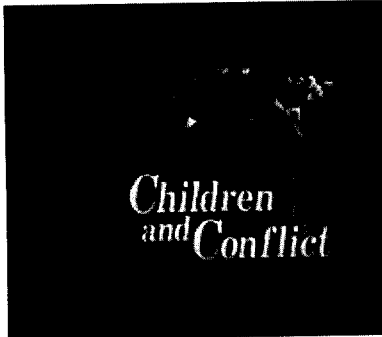
Source: Reebok International

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Online NewsHour a NewsHour with Jim Lehrer Transcript
ONLINE FOCUS

CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

March 10, 2005



A new United Nations report on children and armed conflict says children in areas ravaged by war are at great risk for abuse and exploitation. The U.N. special representative for Children and Armed Conflict discusses the report's findings.

[Click here to listen to this segment in RealAudio](#)

NewsHour Links

Dec. 25, 2002:
A look at a [United Nations report denouncing by name governments and guerrilla groups that have recruited children to fight their wars.](#)

Browse the NewsHour's coverage of the [United Nations/International Issues](#)

RAY SUAREZ: From the dangerous streets of Iraq to the battlefields of the Congo to the jungles of Colombia, around the globe children are living in war zones, sometimes even taking up arms themselves.

A recently released UN report on children and armed conflict cited five grave abuses: Child soldiering; abduction; abuse; attacks on schools; and sexual violence. Fifty-four groups were specifically named as perpetrators in eleven countries.



The UN estimated some six million children have been injured in the last decade from war, and two million have been killed. Thirteen million are internally displaced because of war, and two hundred and fifty thousand are child soldiers.

As part of what it calls a "name and shame" strategy, the report cited the armies of three nations as alleged violators: Congo, Uganda and Myanmar.

NewsHour Extra

News for Students:
Top Story: UN Fights to Stop Use of Children in

In northern Uganda, conflict between the government and the Lords Resistance Army is now in its 18th year. The anti-government force actively abducts children, forcing boys to become fighters and girls to become sex slaves.

Global Armed
Conflict. 2.28.05

Top Story:
Disarming
Liberian Child
Soldiers. 8.27.03

Lesson Plan:
Children at War

And in Sudan, thousands are displaced and have been forced into refugee camps as fighting continues in the Darfur region.



Of those in the camps, many of them are children. The Janjaweed in Darfur continue the practice of using children within their ranks.

Outside Links

[United Nations
Children's Fund](#)

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict was also discussed for the first time in the report. Also for the first time, the UN report issued recommendations for change and punishments.

They include a monitoring system to report violations, and international enforcement of travel bans and blocked arms sales.

Two other countries who are permanent members of the Security Council were included in the report: Great Britain, where the 37-year conflict in Northern



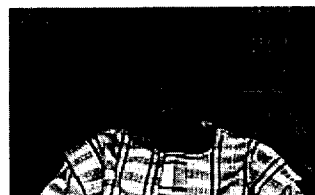
Ireland drew criticism for the recruitment of children by paramilitary groups.

And Russia was noted for last September's terrorist siege at a school in Beslan, in North Osetia. More than 300 children, parents and teachers were killed.

Faces of war and conflict

RAY SUAREZ: Joining me to tell us more about this year's report and the ongoing discussions at the Security Council to get these measures adopted is UN Undersecretary Olara Otunnu.

He's Kofi Annan's special representative for children in armed conflict. And Mr. Undersecretary, maybe we could begin by getting your overview of the state of children in conflict areas around the world. Is it improving?



OLARA OTUNNU: Well, children exposed to war are among the most vulnerable anywhere in the world. We've been

working on this issue for a few years.

And there are areas of improvement, but there are situations which continue to be very difficult.

For example, in Sierra Leone, in Angola, in the Balkans, in Liberia, in East Timor, these are all situations in which the conditions of children have improved relative to what they were a few years ago.

The number of child soldiers has gone down from about three hundred thousand maybe five years ago, to about a quarter of a million.

But beside this progress, there remains a situation which is entirely grave and unacceptable in most of the places where war are going on today, where children are being used as child soldiers, girls are being raped, where there is abduction going on, schools are being attacked, and children are being killed and maimed. And we've got to stop this.

RAY SUAREZ: You know, here in the United States I think a lot of people live lives, pretty ordinary lives. It would make it very hard for them to imagine the kind of children you and your investigators saw out there in the world.



Maybe you could tell our audience a little bit more about the kinds of situations you found individual people in.

OLARA OTUNNU: Well, typically these are situations in which war, mainly civil wars, have been going on, not just for months and for years; in many cases for decades-- in Colombia, in Sudan, in Burundi, in Sierra Leone, in Liberia, in Angola, in Myanmar, in Nepal.

So most of these are wars which have gone on for years and therefore subjected generations of children to ruin. These are ordinary children like children anywhere else.

They are very bright kids; they are curious, they're thirsty for knowledge. They want to develop and be

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OLARA OTUNNU
United Nations

the future leaders of their countries.

But the conditions in which they are born and the exploitation and abuse by the cynical leaders of groups which are fighting is ruining their lives, and they need the support of the international community to assure their protection and to assure relief for them.

U.N. resources and motivation

RAY SUAREZ: Is there any particular child who caught your attention or whose story you heard that stuck out in your mind?

OLARA OTUNNU: Well, I recall very well visiting a place outside Bogota in Colombia and meeting a group of kids who couldn't have access to school and to social services.

They were displaced children. But they were so bright. I came with one ball, a soccer ball, and the excitement in their faces. They began playing like any children anywhere else, and there were volunteers who had come to help them do some very basic lessons in reading and writing.



But these children, you see them in Sudan, in Wao, in Jubah, you see them in Sierra Leone -- which I visited, in Angola-- you see them in Kosovo.

Everywhere I've gone, what is so striking is simply how eager and bright and spirited these children are, and how they do not deserve to be condemned to this life of ruination.

Fortunately today we have the means in the international community. We have the standards, we've got the institutions, and we've got the means of influence to make this happen.

RAY SUAREZ: The means, but does the international community have the will, Mr. Undersecretary? Is there an appetite in the UN to start slapping bans on travel, to stop sending aid to some of these countries, to make it impossible for them to buy weapons, for instance?

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OLARA OTUNNU
United Nations

OLARA OTUNNU: Well, this has been a building process, block by block. It's taken several years to arrive at this turning point, and we're at a turning point of great consequence.

I believe that the Security Council will adopt the measures which are now before it. They're discussing it right now.

That is entirely feasible, and I hope the Council will be able to adopt these measures.

Tactics to combat exploiters

RAY SUAREZ: By publicly naming the regimes, the parties, the institutions that are using children in this way, victimizing children in this way, by shaming them publicly and then calling for the UN to back this up with action, have you seen in the last several weeks that the UN as an institution is really willing to do this?

After all, we've known about children soldiers, about the use of rape as a tool of political violence for years.



development.

OLARA OTUNNU: Well, this very fact of accepting this issue as an integral part of the Security Council agenda is a major achievement, is a relatively recent

We have been naming and listing offending parties over the last three years, and that has caused tremendous pressure on them. What we now want is not just to name and list, but to name and hold them accountable, and to do that you need both a carrot and a stick.

You need to have the names listed, impose sanctions, and then give the opportunity for these parties within a time-bound frame to clean up their act, to stop these violations on the ground. That is what we now need.

RAY SUAREZ: Stop those violations on the ground, or else what?



What is the UN arguably prepared to do that might keep these regimes from continuing to victimize children?

OLARA OTUNNU: The Security Council can impose sanctions on the offending parties. Whether the parties are governments or they're insurgent groups, it doesn't matter. But the target is the party, not the country, not the state, but the offending party.

In addition, we've now got various juridical institutions. There are ad hoc tribunals, there's the international criminal court that can hold individual leaders accountable. And we've got the pressure of international public opinion.

These groups do not want to be exposed in the media. They don't want their names to be listed and be held accountable for abusing children.

Searching for compliance

RAY SUAREZ: Have any of the parties that were named in your report since contacted either you or another part of the UN and said, "We're sorry we're on that list. We want to do what's necessary to get off it," and started to work with you?

OLARA OTUNNU: Yes, indeed. In fact, this year's list has eight parties dropped relative to the previous list, which means that there are eight parties which have, in fact, complied with what the Security Council asked.



There are a few other parties added, especially from Darfur in Sudan. But since this latest report came out, for example, we've had several parties make contact, including the LTTE of Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers, who contacted us to say, "We've noticed that our name has been listed. We want to discuss and we want to see how best we can address the violations for which we have been cited."

We welcome this message by the LTTE, but we insist that immediate steps should be taken to bring

an end once and for all for the violations for which they have been cited.

RAY SUAREZ: United Nations Undersecretary Olara Otunnu, thanks for being with us.

OLARA OTUNNU: Thank you. Thank you, Ray.



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Judgment at Baghdad

The Nation.

COLUMN HEADLINE

Ari Berman

Everyone agrees that Saddam Hussein ([news - web sites](#)) and his henchmen, if tried properly, should be found guilty of crimes against humanity. But a long list of human rights groups and international law experts doubt if the tyrant and his deputies will receive the due process and fair trials promised by US and Iraqi authorities.

Legal observers are "concerned about the decision to use the death penalty, unclear rules of evidence and what they see as the accused's inadequate access to their lawyers," the *Los Angeles Times* wrote on Sunday. "They also see an overall lack of transparency in the proceedings and question whether the Iraqi judges have the expertise to handle such far-reaching cases." Last week insurgents [assassinated](#) a judge and lawyer for the special tribunal a day after the [first charges](#) were announced.

The first defendants will be five of [Saddam's lieutenants](#), most notably his half-brother Barzan and Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan, both implicated in a series of mass killings in 1982. Future defendants include Saddam's notorious cousin, Ali Hassan Majid aka Chemical Ali, and the former defense minister. The tribunal will use these cases to build a paper trail against the leader himself, who likely won't be tried until next year.

Unlike the four international war crimes tribunals currently [run by the UN](#) in the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Rwanda, Saddam's trial will be administered by Iraqis and supervised by America. Paul Bremer created the Iraqi Special Tribunal in December 2003, naming [Salem Chalabi](#), Ahmad's nephew, as special prosecutor. Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi eventually pushed Chalabi aside by stacking the court with [hand-picked loyalists](#). The names of the tribunal's 35 judges and 400 staff members have been shielded for security reasons, only increasing skepticism.

Then there's the question of US complicity. The American government supplied Saddam with [landmines](#) for his war against Iran ([news - web sites](#)), and American companies, with the government's approval, sold the [chemical agents](#) used against Iranian troops and Iraq ([news - web sites](#))'s own Kurdish population. A trial under American occupation likely won't force [Donald Rumsfeld](#) to describe his meetings with Saddam in 1983 and 1984, after the US knew he was deploying chemical weapons. Or ask [George Bush I](#) why he issued a national security directive in October 1989 calling for normal diplomatic relations between the US and Iraq. Or why [Colin Powell](#) and [Dick Cheney](#) encouraged the Kurds in the North and Shiites in the South to revolt, and then did nothing when Saddam brutally suppressed the uprisings, leading to thousands of mass graves.

"We want Saddam to talk," Alan Zangaga of the US-based [Kurdish Human Rights Watch](#) told *Inter Press Service*. "We want to know from Saddam which weapons he used and where he got them...We need this information established in a court of law." Once public, the Kurds and other groups targeted by Saddam could sue American companies for damages, similar to how Holocaust survivors targeted Swiss banks.




Since the war, America has adopted a go-it-alone mentality especially evident in the creation of the new tribunal. After failing to [protect](#) mass grave sites and government ministries housing crucial evidence in the wake of the invasion, coalition authorities [rebuffed human rights groups](#) when they offered assistance to the tribunal. Kofi Annan ([news - web sites](#)), angered by the tribunal's use of the death penalty and America's skirting of international law, forbade The Hague ([news - web sites](#)) from helping to [train](#) Iraqi lawyers and judges. The State and Justice Departments are now assuming this formidable task.

"Where in the world can you say this is an independent judiciary, with US proxies appointing and controlling judges, with [US-gift-wrapped cases](#)?" asks Cherif Bassiouni, former chairman of the UN war crimes investigation in Yugoslavia. "In the

Arab world, there is already the perception this a mockery." America's cavalier overreach could also taint the tribunal's legitimacy where it matters most. "This tribunal is not ours," Zuhair Almaliky, the chief investigative judge of Iraq's central criminal court, told *The New York Times* last summer. "It is somebody who came from abroad who created a court for themselves."

Along with its revisionist rationale for the war (see democracy), the Bush Administration hopes that Saddam's trial will overshadow the chaos sowed by invasion and occupation. For the sake of Iraqis, justice should matter more than PR.

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