

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:

Thursday, March 24, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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'Charles Taylor Recruited Child Soldiers' -Wife

Called from The Analyst (Monrovia)

Jewel Howard-Taylor, the woman who prefers to call her husband "Chief" poured her heart out in an effort to present former president Charles as the angel is not for obvious reason. She did good job of making a good reading for many Liberians who would learn nothing from her. But then she vacillated and before she caught her bearing, she portrayed Charles Taylor as a born-again Christian with a horde of concubines in tow



Taylor; always in trouble and a benefactor who sent children to their early graves while his own children stay in the comfort of their "White Flower" home in the Congo Town suburb.

The Analyst's Staff has been looking at another part of Jewel's interview with Nigeria's Ovation magazine.

The former first lady of Liberia, Jewel Howard-Taylor, has revealed that former president Taylor retained a horde of concubines while president of Liberia, besides other discrepancies.

Mrs. Taylor, who granted an interview to the Ovation Magazine of Nigeria in a hope of exonerating her husband

from a 17-count charge of murder, rape, and mayhem being held against him by the UN-backed Special Court in Freetown, implied at one point of the interview that Taylor did not keep their marital home chaste.

Answering a reporter's question about the fidelity of Mr. Taylor, she said he has one wife - her - but noted, "He got plenty concubines don't bother me about that one."

Perhaps embarrassed and taking off guide by the question, the former first lady

'Charles Taylor Recruited Child Soldiers' -Wife

From front page

neither named the concubines nor said how many they were. But observers, who recalled media reports that Taylor fled into exile with more than one hundred girls and women believe the concubines may well be the size of a soccer squad even though this could not be independently verified. It may however be recalled that on a number of occasions, one Hadja Taylor, claiming to be another legally-wedded wife of the president and therefore another "Former First Lady" attended official functions with Mr. Taylor to the embarrassment of official of the Taylor government. Hadja, a Muslim, openly bragged about being one of the wives of the president, something neither he nor Jewel denied or clarified. Few months prior to the escalation of the war, it was rumored that Mrs. Taylor abandoned her official duties at the Executive Mansion in protest of Hadja's claim


to their wedlock. With the return of Jewel to Liberia shortly after landing in Calabar and with the whereabouts of Hadja not certain, observers say the best bet is that she may be with Taylor in Calabar where the daughter of the Governor of Calabar, Donald Duke, is rumored to Taylor's another wedded wife. It may be recalled that on account of Hadja, Jewel reportedly abandoned her official at the Executive Mansion for weeks before she reconsidered upon the intervention of traditional women of Liberia. In another development, without intending to, the former Liberian first lady who appeared au courant with most of the military inner workings of the Taylor regime disclosed that the Taylor administration hired child soldiers, an act considered criminal under Liberian and international law, to fight on the side of his militias forces. She left the cat out of the bag in this way in an apparent effort to prove Taylor's magnanimity: "Children used to get hit

at the front and he would fly them to Abidjan. He wanted to give them the best care because he felt that those guys were giving their lives for him. And this is person who people can now demonize and say he is a wicked pleader? It is not possible." In her view it is kind heartedness when little children who were recruited to fight a war they knew nothing about get wounded and are taken to the hospital abroad. But this is a woman who will give Taylor credit for launching a "popular uprising" and discredit others for "using him" to do so. Conceding that he was not military personnel prior to the launch of the guerrilla incursion, she said: "No, he wasn't before, but the politicians in Liberia pumped him up saying this is somebody we can use. Let's support Charles Taylor to do an incursion on Liberia and at the end of it when he was to have killed Doe, they would have said

well, you cannot be president of Liberia. And he said he had given so much blood and tears to give the presidency away to somebody else. So that was the beginning of the end." Beginning of the end of collaboration with the politicians, the king, maker, and perhaps with the U.S. government. Taylor became a lone figure, outsmarting everyone else, said one recent commentary. So everyone agrees that he should take sole responsibility for the war in Liberia and in Sierra Leone, but Jewel believes that is farfetched and unfair. For her, prosecution for Taylor's war connections is either Liberia or Geneva in Switzerland; she gave no reasons. "As I said, if Liberia gets a war crime court they will say there were some atrocities done in Liberia, should we say we will go and get President X because they gave Charles Taylor guns to come into Liberia and bring a popular uprising. No we won't. Charles Taylor would be held accountable if he goes to Liberia the Liberian people feel they have something against him, he could be responsible for

whatever happens in Liberia, so I think it's just a story that was written to provide more pressure on the Charles Taylor government, because frankly it was economic, economic sabotage, shutting all of the economic links," she said. According to her, it became political, a travel ban and ban on diamonds, indicating that the series of impositions against the NPP-led government was a systematic plan to strangle the government. Describing the move on the part of the UN as "sad," and intended to eliminate Taylor, she noted: "It was all just a game which is so sad, because like I said, you look the story on Iraq and it brings to my mind what has happened in Liberia but the decks are already stacked against Charles Taylor [in Sierra Leone]. Why don't they take him to The Hague?" Would there be fair trial in The Hague where the Sierra Leone Special Court takes its orders? Perhaps that is not a question for Jewel who believes that the way out

of the quagmire created by her husband is an African peace formula. She wondered: "So why did they decide that the formula for truth and reconciliation was best for South Africa. Was it only because they were dealing with the whites against the blacks? So we as African now must design a formula where sometimes we look at the outside world and we try to jettison those western values that have no place in own customs." Reminiscing the past, she noted, "I remember the tribal thing in Liberia for instance we had that hut that was called the 'palaver hut. Whatever happened the superintendent or whoever the leader of the clan would convene a session where the elders would come and sit and people would talk and you would resolve the issue." Irrespective of whatever anyone thought, according to observers, all of Africa, including Nigeria that is currently shielding Charles Taylor from prosecution agreed that impunity must be eradicated and they are prepared to prosecute individuals accused of war crimes. Charles Taylor may one day have to answer for his crimes, whether in Sierra Leone or in The Hague if one follows Jewel's wit.

Source: News & Business > News > **News, Most Recent 90 Days (English, Full Text)** 

Terms: **special court and sierra leone** ([Edit Search](#))

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Africa News March 22, 2005 Tuesday

Copyright 2005 AllAfrica, Inc.
Africa News

March 22, 2005 Tuesday

LENGTH: 1234 words

HEADLINE: Liberia;
Former First Lady Jewel Taylor Says Her Husband Recruited Child Soldiers

BYLINE: The Analyst

BODY:
-Says Her Husband Has Girlfriends; Recruited Child Soldiers

Jewel Howard-Taylor, the woman who prefers to call her husband "Chief" poured her heart out in an effort to present former president Charles as the angel is not for obvious reason. She did good job of making a good reading for many Liberians who would learn nothing from her. But then she vacillated and before she caught her bearing, she portrayed Charles Taylor as a born-again Christian with a horde of concubine in tow and a benefactor who sent children to their early graves while his own children stay in the comfort of their "White Flower" home in the Congo Town suburb.

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Terms: **special court and sierra leone** ([Edit Search](#))

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Concord Times, Thursday, March 24, 2005.

Dutch man arrested for war crimes

Special Court Prosecutor, David Crane Wednesday confirmed the arrest of a Dutch national, Gus Kouwenhoven on charges of committing war crimes against Liberians and violating a United Nations arms embargo.

Crane says Kouwenhoven's arrest is a major blow against western profiteers who enrich themselves on the suffering of Africans.

"I have long been aware of Kouwenhoven's criminal activity, his involvement in Charles Taylor's inner circle and direct support for

Taylor's war machine," Prosecutor David Crane said, adding that his trial would spotlight the roles of arms traffickers and international financiers as well as the abuse of West Africa's resources.

"I've not collected evidence to place him among those bearing "greatest responsibility" for international crimes during Sierra Leone's civil conflict, but I have instructed Special Court investigators to cooperate with the Dutch authorities," he told the UN Information Services.

He says former President Taylor re-



David Crane - Prosecutor

mains wanted by the Special Court to face a 17-count indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

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Africa News March 22, 2005 Tuesday

Copyright 2005 AllAfrica, Inc.
Africa News

March 22, 2005 Tuesday

LENGTH: 236 words

HEADLINE: Sierra Leone;

Sierra Leone Court Welcomes Arrest of Dutch Man Accused of War Crimes

BYLINE: UN News Service

BODY:

The prosecutor of the **Special Court** for **Sierra Leone** today welcomed the recent arrest of a Dutch businessman on charges of committing war crimes against Liberians and violating a United Nations arms embargo as "a major blow against Western profiteers who enrich themselves on the suffering of Africans."

"I have long been aware of Gus Kouwenhoven's criminal activity, his involvement in (former Liberian President) Charles Taylor's inner circle and direct support for Taylor's war machine," Prosecutor David Crane said.

The trial in a Netherlands courtroom of Mr. Kouwenhoven, who was arrested on Friday, would spotlight the roles of arms traffickers and international financiers, as well as the abuse of West Africa's resources, he said.

Mr. Crane added that he had not collected the evidence to place Mr. Kouwenhoven among those bearing "greatest responsibility" for international crimes during **Sierra Leone's** civil conflict, but he had instructed his **Special Court** investigators to cooperate with the Dutch authorities.

Former President Taylor remains wanted by the **Special Court** to face a 17-count indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The **Special Court** is the world's first hybrid international war crimes tribunal, and was established by an agreement in January 2002 between the United Nations and the Republic of **Sierra Leone**. It is headquartered in the capital Freetown.

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Sierra Leone Welcomes Arrest Of Charles Taylor Associate On Gun Running Charges

By Cindy Shiner
Washington
22 March 2005

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Listen to Shiner interview

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has welcomed the arrest of an associate of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in the Netherlands.

The Special Court Leone says Dutch authorities have charged Gus van Kouwenhoven with war crimes and gun smuggling in violation of a United Nations arms embargo on Liberia.

The UN-backed Special Court said it had provided extensive assistance to Dutch investigators in the case. The court said it did not have evidence to find that Mr. Kouwenhoven was among those bearing "greatest responsibility" for international crimes in Sierra Leone so the court could not indict him. However, the court said enough evidence was found to charge Mr. Kouwenhoven with war crimes and arms trafficking. Mr. Kouwenhoven ran a hotel in Liberia as well as a timber company.

"Charles Taylor called the company that Gus was general manager of his 'pepper bush.' In West Africa this basically means something that is very, very important to you and it provided a lot of money for Taylor and for his exploits in Sierra Leone and really kept him alive and in power in the region," said Alex Yearsley of Global Witness, the London-based private organization that investigates links between resource exploitation and human rights abuses. "


It was a huge amount of money, up to nearly about 100 million dollars a year that Taylor was able to take from the timber trade," said Mr. Yearsley. He told Africa Division reporter Cindy Shiner that Mr. Kouwenhoven sold timber mainly to markets in France and China. Timber sanctions were eventually imposed on Liberia.

Mr. Yearsley said the international community must pay closer attention to issues such as illegal logging. "If law enforcement and intelligence agencies were to begin to really look at some of the economic incentives and drivers behind some of these devastating conflicts then we would really see far less of these operators being able to exist with impunity and to be able to still come into London and Paris and Antwerp and sell their wares," he said.

"It really must end. We must have the end of impunity for these people that seem to walk around with total freedom."

Former President Taylor fled Liberia in August 2003 and is living in exile in Nigeria.

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Africa News March 23, 2005 Wednesday

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Africa News

March 23, 2005 Wednesday

LENGTH: 1960 words

HEADLINE: Sierra Leone;
The TRC Report - An Embarrassment to Government?

BYLINE: Standard Times

BODY:

As stated in the first phase of the series, the outcome of the TRC was a big embarrassment to the SLPP government, that is why the latter has decided to keep the document under the carpet or tries to "doctor" and present it in a diluted form to the general public, thus depriving the people and the international community the privilege to be fully abreast with its contents and scope of the report.

What has been "dubbed" a true and realistic account of the horrors the people of this country went through in the hands of the RUF, AFRC Kamajors, and the government itself.

What is particularly commendable about the report is the facts that the commissioners surrendered themselves to the truth and did not in anyway allow their political and other factors to affect their impartiality.

Despite the fact that the commissioners were appointed by government, they actually turned out to be the wrong persons in the eyes of the government for the job, even though by virtue of their impartiality and uncompromising stance they were in fact the right people to unearth the truth bothering on the nature of the war.

The genesis of the impartiality of the commissioners was first demonstrated at the hearing sessions, when the President, H. E. Alhaji Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, was bombarded with a number of questions, which evidently made him to leave the hall (at the mercy of the commissioners) with his head down.

Mind you my dear readers the first phase of the series deals exclusively with the President's role in protracting the war and his inability to defend the populace.

This phase as promised, will discuss among other things the role played by Solomon Berewa in his capacity as Attorney General and Minister of Justice in igniting mob justice against suspected collaborators, justifying and legitimizing the arbitrary detention, torture and execution of a number of citizens.

Accordingly, the commission discovered that the then Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Solomon Berewa, played a particularly conspicuous role in the conduct of both civilian and military trials.

Solomon Berewa, the report states, exercised his discretionary power of prosecution in an

arbitrary fashion.

Furthermore, Berewa, the report went, sat on the mercy committee table whose role was to advise the President on the issue of pardons for the 34 condemned soldiers.

The commission also discovered that Berewa held an inappropriate amount of power in deciding the fate of the persons he had himself selected, for trial.

On a rather serious note, the commission discovered that the court martial of the 37 soldiers of the SLA, which concluded with 34 guilty verdicts and 3 acquittals on Monday 12th October 1998, did not allow for the right of the accused to appeal and the right to be fully informed of the charges, and as such, the commission stated that the trial was conducted in contravention of the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights and of course the international covenant on civil and political rights.

On igniting reprisals against perceived collaborators, the commission noted that Solomon Berewa in his former capacity set out the policy of the government towards collaborators in a letter entitled "present position relating to the collaborators of the ARRC junta".

The use of language in the letter, the commission report went on, was dangerously ambiguous, adding that the content was open to wide interpretation, which consequently led to abuses and violations.

The report further noted that Solomon Berewa criminalized acts of collaboration with the AFRC and sought to have all persons falling into that category detained in the custody of the state, even though this clause was not codified in the laws.

It would be noted that in his capacity as Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Solomon Berewa had a great say in the controversial phase of this present regime, and according to report, the president actually relied on him on matters dealing with perceived political opponents and coupists.

The condition of detention at the Pademba Road Prisons during the transitional period, that is between February 1998 and January 6, 1999, the commission report discovered, were deplorable and in breach of multiple provisions of both the **Sierra Leone** constitution and applicable human rights instrument including the African charter on human and peoples' rights and the international covenant on civil and political rights.

These conditions, the commission noted, has not changed up to the time of writing the report and therefore called on the government to take immediate actions to correct the anomalies.

One of these conditions the report highlighted, include torture, which in itself is a gross human rights abuse.

The commission also heaped blame on the government for jeopardizing the success of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) by appointing the former junta leader, Johnny Paul Koroma as chairman of that strategic commission.

Which the commission referred to as a "strategic miscalculation", which both served as a way to reward a soldier who had committed treason and then plunged the country into chaos and also as a way of setting the stage for the alienation of the RUF as demonstrated in the May 8 attack on Foday Sankoh's residence that subsequently left a number of civilians dead and fatally wounded.

The commission also held the government squarely responsible for the lapses in the Lome Peace Accord.

Accordingly, the commission blamed the government for failing to fulfill several undertakings made in the agreement including positions for the RUF in parastatals, diplomatic and other bodies.

The commission also discovered that government did not promote the spirit of power sharing intended by the Lome Accord.

This no doubt, is attributable to the RUF's adamant stance to have confidence in the accord as demonstrated in their taking of hostages, which sent the country into another bloody backlash.

The commission also noted that the decision by government to accommodate the West Side Boys as agents of state security under the absolute control of Johnny Paul Koroma, to be extremely negligent, especially so when the decision itself allowed a band of brutal warlords to take the law into their own hands, and also take over the responsibility of maintaining the peace for civilians whom they had wantonly attacked during the January 6 invasion of Freetown.

The commission further holds the President, H.E. Alhaji Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, responsible for undermining the cause of reconciliation by failing to release a number of key RUF operatives who were arbitrarily arrested by Johnny Paul Koroma and who by all indications, have been denied the right to a fair trial.

The commission also holds the government responsible for failing to prevent the well-intentioned May 8, 2000 demonstration against Foday Sankoh, from descending into violence.

While accusing the government of distorting the information relating to the deaths that ensued, the commission held the view that the approximately 40 people killed during that attack died of gunshots exchanged between the RUF, West Side Boys (who actually started the shooting), the CDF and other security forces including the SLA.

Under international law, the government, the report stated, is strictly responsible for violations resulting from the acts of its organs or agents and of any person acting under its control.

The government, the report added, also held the government grossly responsible for its own failure to prevent or take appropriate action in response to such violations.

The commission report also went ahead to name those individuals who were found to have played a significant part in leading the acts and making the decisions attributed to the SLPP government in the report.

Some of these include H.E. the President, Alhaji Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, Dr. Albert Joe Demby, Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, Solomon Berewa, Dr. Sama Banya, Dr. Prince A. Harding and Dr. Julius Spencer.

In all these it is easy to notice that the TRC report seriously indicted the government and it is only fair to say that it is not an inescapable embarrassment for the President and his government, which established it in the first place.

No doubt therefore, this explains the reason why the report has been made a private document, and according to impeccable sources close to the government, this all-important report will only be a public document after it would have undergone an illegal process of "doctoring".

But no matter what happens to the report at the end of the day, what is worthy of note is the fact that, by holding on to the document which was meant to be given the widest possible publicity, the government is intentionally depriving the masses of the opportunity to know what exactly led to the war and the role played by the different actors or parties to the conflict.

In essence, it is fair, though not totally correct, to conclude that the TRC process was a mere waste of time and resources for which the government is responsible.

This same scenario stands to repeat itself once more in the makings of the **Special Court for Sierra Leone**, which has already started putting the government in another embarrassing state.

In the original letter from the government requesting the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the establishment of the **Special Court**, the sole intention was to try the leadership of the RUF for acts committed during the war and more especially in relation to the May 8th 2000 incident, which according to the TRC report, was in fact due to the negligence of the government to act promptly and salvage the situation.

From the outset therefore, it was easy to notice that the request for the establishment of the court was ill-intentioned and aimed at undermining the reconciliation efforts dictated by the Lome Accord, which according the TRC report, was violated by both the RUF and the government.

These dangerous miscalculations by the government outlined in the TRC report, was seen at play when it conceded to the swift change in the objective of the **Special Court** from trying the leadership of the RUF to trying those that bear the greatest responsibility, which now encompasses all the factions including pro-government civil defence forces.

As if overshadowed by insensitivity, Solomon Berewa, who signed the **Special Court** agreement on behalf of the government of **Sierra Leone**, failed to realize the potential consequences on the government and its operations, before appending his signature.

The person of Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, who actually laid his life to see the junta regime overturned, has been languishing in jail for over two years now with no guarantee of ever being a free man again in the normal way.

The agreement also put the statutes of the **Special Court** above the laws of the land, which in itself, is unconstitutional.

While we wait patiently to see how the operations of the **Special Court** proceeds, what is important therefore is the fact that, the agreement paved the way for the quick enrichment of hundreds of foreign nationals while the amputees and war victims, continue to languish in endemic poverty and unwarranted suffering.

We shall patiently wait to see whether in fact the **Special Court** will not turn out to be a mere waste of time and resources as in the case of the TRC.

The next phase of the series will talk about the irrelevance of the **Special Court** and how the government is skillfully dodging the aspect of the TRC report which talks about reparation to war victims and the need to establish a national human n right commission among others.

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