

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:

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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The Exclusive. Tuesday, April 12, 2005.

At Special Court...

SAJ Musa's Wife Named In Child Abduction

By Joseph Turay

Special Court witness in the ongoing Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) trials whose code

name was given as TFI 227 disclosed to the court yesterday during examination in chief by Prosecution lawyer Robert Brown, that the wife

of the late Junta coupist, Solomon Anthony James Musa commonly called SAJ Musa, Tina Musa,

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SAJ Musa's Wife Named In Child Abduction

From front page

was amongst those junta leaders in the AFRC/RUF who between January and February 1999 abducted children and used them as child combatants.

The witness, a former junta rebel, said he was captured by one rebel commander named Corporal Bastard who gave him a merciless beating before he took him to Benguema where he met other captured civilians and rebel commanders like one Brig. 55, Gun Boot, Tina Musa and other hard core junta commanders, all of whom he

said had children between the ages 10 to 14 years they used as child combatants. "I saw about 25 children at Benguema," the former fighter said, adding that he spent two weeks at Benguema before the rebels moved with them to Blama which he said was about 26 to 28 miles from Freetown.

TF1 227 recounted that he saw other rebel commanders like one Bazy, Junior Lion, Gold Teeth who he said was in charge of communications, and one Forayba who he disclosed shot a man dead for a lump

of sugar. The witness confirmed that he had been told about the incident by one Small Boys Unit member who witnessed the scene. Witness went on to disclose that an eighteen year old girl 18 was also shot dead by one Brig. 55 at the same Blama where he said they spent about four weeks before they moved to Mamama and later Mile 38 after they got wind that ECOMOG troops were advancing towards their end. "I was at mile 38 when one soldier told me Capt. Snake had killed over hundred civilians," witness recounted.



Bringing Charles Taylor to Justice: Pressure Mounting On Bush, U.S.

Liberian Observer (Monrovia)

NEWS

April 11, 2005

Posted to the web April 11, 2005

By Rodney D. Sieh
Washington, DC

Things aren't looking good for the former Liberian dictator, Charles Taylor these days. Daily Observer Editor-in-Chief Rodney D. Sieh, looks at the latest wave of efforts being mounted to transfer the rebel-leader turned president over to the International Court.

U.S. President George Bush is being accused of not doing enough to bring Taylor to justice.

Charles Taylor must be sweating at his exile residence in Calabar, Nigeria. And he should have every reason to be.

This week, the Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa, Rep. Ed Royce, R. Calif. will be introducing a resolution calling on Nigeria to transfer Taylor to the International Court.

The move by Royce comes amid reports that several U.S. lawmakers have been pressing the issue over the last few weeks for Taylor to be brought to justice. Many lawmakers have gone even further in accusing President Bush of not doing enough to bring the former warlord to justice.

The European Parliament has gone a step ahead of their American counterparts and has already approved a resolution calling for Taylor to be brought before the court.

Last week the Associated Press reported that Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, a high-ranking Democrat on the subcommittee that funds foreign aid, offered a measure calling on the United States to use "its voice and vote" at the United Nations to force Taylor's transfer.

\$2 Million Reward

This was the second time in recent years that Leahy had brought the Taylor issue to the forefront of the U.S. lawmaking body. In 2003, Leahy was very vocal in his plea for Taylor to be brought to justice and suggested a \$2 million price reward for anyone who brings Taylor before the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Leahy described then, why he felt it was so important for West Africa, as well as the cause of international justice, to bring Charles Taylor before the Special Court, according to his statement before the U.S. Senate in

October 2003.

"Since his exile to Nigeria, press reports have revealed that Charles Taylor continues to try to foment chaos and instability in Liberia. There is no doubt that he wants to return, and will do so if given the opportunity, according to Leahy's statement.

Leahy said at the time that it was important that Taylor appears before the Special Court. This needs to happen immediately. Allowing him to remain in Nigeria is wrong. It is impeding peace and prosperity in a region that has endured tremendous suffering over the past decade," said the statement.

In revisiting the issue last week, Leahy said that "Despite assurances by the State Department more than a year ago that Taylor will ultimately appear before the court, they have made little effort to get him there and, even worse, they seem to have no strategy for doing so," Leahy said in a statement.

Pressing the matter

According to the Associated Press, the U.S. State Department says it is working on getting Taylor turned over to the court, but declined to provide details. Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., said he has discussed Taylor with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other U.S. officials and has received assurances they would pursue the matter.

Taylor is under indictment by a war crimes tribunal, accused of crimes against humanity, notably for those meted against his own Liberian people and those in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Taylor, who started a rebel movement in Liberia in 1989, was elected president of Liberia in July of 1997, garnering over 75 percent of the vote in an election that international observers deemed fair. Taylor's ascent to power, and the election of fellow National Patriotic Party candidates to a majority of legislative seats in the National Assembly, marked what many hoped would be the end of seven years of civil strife.

Reign of Terror

During his presidency, Taylor continued to battle insurgents who opposed his rule. He was also accused of selling arms and other supplies to rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone. Taylor reportedly traded the weapons for diamonds. The rebels Taylor purportedly aided continued their war against the Sierra Leone government, conducting brutal sweeps through civilian areas, chopping off the arms, legs and noses of thousands of suspected government supporters, including women and children. On June 4, 2003, Taylor was indicted for war crimes by a United Nation's tribunal in Sierra Leone. Some U.S. lawmakers have hinted in recent weeks that Taylor may be violating the terms of his asylum in Nigeria by making trips overseas and talking to leaders in the sub-region.

Royce's voice

It is not clear what impact Royce's resolution will have on this latest attempt to bring Taylor before the International Court. But subcommittee hearings often lead to legislative initiatives and Royce's voice has been a vocal one on issues concerning Africa over the years. As the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa between 1997 to 2000, Royce conducted over 60 hearings, dealing with a wide range of issues affecting the African continent. These included trade and investment, terrorism, HIV/AIDS, agricultural development, and the management of natural resources. Hearings also looked at trouble spots in Africa, including Liberia, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe.

The approval of a resolution by the European parliament, calling for Taylor to be brought to the International Court is bound to pile pressure on U.S. lawmakers to do the same. In any instance, Taylor's fate might now be in the hands of Nigeria. Although he was promised asylum as part of the deal for him to relinquish power, it may be almost impossible for Nigeria to turn down requests from two of the world's most powerful lawmaking bodies. Especially if the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate come around and agree to follow the footsteps of their European counterparts. For now it seems, Taylor's presence in Nigeria could either be described as fragile at best, or the beginning of the end of perhaps one of the most notorious rebel leaders to ever grace the face of Africa.

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An Interview With Peter Penfold

From Last Issue

Gberie: You have expressed strong views about the indictment of Hinga Norman by the UN-created Special Court for Sierra Leone. Why are you so passionate about this one case?

Penfold: I am appalled at the way Chief Sam Hinga Norman has been treated. In my experience, Sam Hinga Norman was the one government minister who tried to stop the illegal coup in May 1997, at great personal risk to himself. After President Kabbah and most of his ministers had fled the country, Norman remained behind trying to rally forces loyal to the President. For days we kept him in hiding and eventually had to spirit him out of the country on board the USS Kearsage. After that, he helped organize the resistance against the AFRC junta inside Sierra Leone with the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), the only indigenous force under the command of the President. The CDF made a significant contribution towards restoration of the democratic government, and, although I do not dispute that some members of the CDF may have committed some terrible deeds - fighting fire with fire - I do not believe that these were part of an orchestrated and deliberate policy, in contrast to the RUE, nor do I believe that Chief Norman should be held personally responsible for them.

Chief Norman also played a key role in the subsequent peace process. In the eyes of most Sierra Leoneans, and me, he is a hero. That he should now find himself indicted for 'war crimes' is an outrage and an injustice. What message does Sam Norman's indictment send to others who are prepared to fight for the cause of peace and democracy?

Gberie: So what do you think this whole Special Court will lead to? Do you see it as a potentially

destabilizing instrument, or a useful instrument in Sierra Leone's transition from war to a peace process?

I have felt honoured to be appointed a Paramount Chief and a Freeman of the city of Freetown and I take both honours seriously and try to meet my obligations.

face the Special Court, I see no further purpose for this expensive and divisive piece of judicial machinery. The only detainee of any stature is Chief Sam Hinga Norman, thereby creating the impression that he is the one who 'bears the greatest responsibility' for the atrocities. This is ridiculous. I accept that the international community cannot allow people to commit awful atrocities with impunity. That is why the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been established. The ICC cannot be used for Sierra Leone war crimes because it had not come into being at the time that the atrocities were committed, but if some of the others indicted by the Special Court need to be prosecuted, they should be handed over to the Sierra Leone courts, which are perfectly capable of trying them (as was demonstrated during the internationally monitored treason trials). We should be doing everything to support the work of the ICC, instead of being diverted by judicial experiments like the Sierra

Leone Special Court.

I find the role of the US government in all this particularly incongruous. I believe that it is no coincidence that the one major country which does not support the ICC is the main country supporting the Special Court. The US is the leading funder of the Court to the tune of around \$60 million and its Chief Prosecutor is a retired US military prosecutor. At the very time when the Americans are pushing the work of the Special Court, they have signed an agreement with the Sierra Leone government (and other governments around the world) exempting US citizens from being sent to the International Criminal Court for committing atrocities and human rights violations. Here again is an example of the United States decreeing 'Do what I say, but not what I do'. In the light of events in Iraq, this is especially duplicitous.

Gberie: What keeps you so attached in Sierra Leone even after the cruel way you were treated by your government over it.

Penfold: My love for Sierra Leone is part of my wider commitment to Africa, where I have spent the majority of my working life. It has been both rewarding and frustrating, but never dull.

Sierra Leone is a special country. I have written recently that what attracts one to the country is the people. One cannot help but admire their courage and resilience as they grapple to achieve peace and embrace democracy. Every single Sierra Leonean has suffered a personal tragedy in recent times, whether it is the loss of a loved one or a limb, a home or a job, and yet they have demonstrated an amazing capacity to pick themselves up and move on. They have suffered so much, they deserve better.

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honours seriously and try to meet my obligations.

I think it is particularly important in Sierra Leone's case to help the disabled and unfortunate. In this connection I have developed a close link with the Milton Margai School for the Blind in Freetown and I was delighted that we were able to arrange for the school's choir to tour the UK last year. They were an inspiration to all who met them. We have now established a charity in the UK to support the School, of which I am the Chairman.

Gberie: What is your view of the current UN deployment in Liberia?

Penfold: As I mentioned earlier, one of the lessons to be learned from the Sierra Leone conflict was that it was part of a sub-regional conflict and that until Charles Taylor was dealt with there could be no lasting resolution of the conflict. Thankfully this was finally recognized. Charles Taylor has now gone but the peace has still to be won. The peace process in Liberia needs to be carefully handled and requires a strong commitment from the international community, especially the United States, which needs to play the role that the UK did in Sierra Leone, including, if necessary, the deployment of troops.

If the process unravels, then the fragile stability in Sierra Leone will be threatened, the potential for trouble in

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point of view, the easier it is to resolve the inevitable frictions and conflicts which will arise from time to time. It has been rewarding to have a job directed to achieving this.

Guinea will be exacerbated, and the chances of resolving the conflict in the Ivory Coast will be harmed. I do not think that it would help to return Taylor to the new Liberian government nor to hand him over to the Sierra Leone Special Court at this time. As we learned with Sankoh in Sierra Leone, it is best to keep him out of the picture while we consolidate the peace.

Gberie: Any reflections on your long diplomatic career?

Penfold: My 38 years working as a British diplomat have been very fulfilling. I have especially enjoyed serving in Africa and in smaller posts where it was possible to see some tangible results of one's efforts. From working in Africa, one derives a better sense of the priorities of life. Coming back to the UK, I am always amazed at what people consider to be important, as demonstrated by the front pages of most newspapers, for example, the activities of footballers and television performers.

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Awoko. Tuesday April 12, 2005.



Awoko Tok Tok Demoralizing the Sierra Leonean

We are concerned that yet another business venture has opened up in this country and our government has again given it to foreigners to control, as if there are no competent Sierra Leoneans around.

We are concerned because if any country must progress we believe that it is the citizens who will make that possible and not foreigners.

We say so because if today we go to Ghana to look for help in drafting the laws which would make up our constitution; help us set up our local government; help us set up our National Revenue Authority; advise us on how to privatize our parastatals, including telling us how to sell our shares in Rokel Commercial Bank, and of late show us how to run our Ports and also advise us on how to turn the fortunes in the Ports around, it is simply because Ghana as a nation has invested in its human resources.

It is a shame that we in Sierra Leone and most importantly this government, has developed the attitude of playing down the Sierra Leonean for foreign nationals; yet they are the first to shout about 'Pull Him Down' syndrome when in fact they are pulling down the Sierra Leonean on a much more massive scale.

We say so because when the initial agreement for the Special Court was signed, it was a Sierra Leonean who was billed to take up the position of Deputy Prosecutor. However, for reasons best known to them, this government decided to go to Parliament to change the laws and make it possible for them to appoint a foreigner instead. Why?

They did not even stop there; they went ahead to appoint a Samoan as Judge of the Special Court, again in a slot which was supposed to be filled by a Sierra Leonean. Is this not pulling down the Sierra Leonean? Why is this government depriving Sierra Leoneans of serving in an international capacity like that and making a name for our country? Is it not when Sierra Leoneans serve in such capacities that they will be seen, noticed and chosen for other international engagements? If they succeed is that not going to be laurels for our country? Don't we today look on with pride at having a Sierra Leonean serving in the International Court of Justice in The Hague? Why should we not have taken this opportunity to promote Sierra Leoneans? Who does this government think it is helping in this country by appointing foreigners into positions which are supposed to be held by Sierra Leoneans?

Let us be clear here that we do not have any personal queries against the foreigners who hold these positions. Our problems are with our government and we believe their actions have far reaching implications for all Sierra Leoneans especially those who have not been afforded the opportunity to make use of what is and should rightfully be theirs.

We cannot buy the argument that there are not capable or qualified Sierra Leoneans for those jobs. Where did they then find Justice Bankole Thompson who is performing so excellently? Where did they find George Gelaga King who is equally competent? In fact this same Special Court has appointed a number of young and sharp Sierra Leoneans from outside who have been performing tremendously well in the Prosecutor's office. So for us any talk of Sierra Leoneans not being available is rubbish.

So the question needs to be asked, why is this government bent on demoralizing the Sierra Leonean? Is it because they selfishly want to promote their own long time friends? And doing this at the cost of denigrating the whole human resources of a nation? Is this not a treasonable act? Is this not the reason why a foreigner comes here and within a few months he is better off than the Sierra Leonean? With this mentality how can this country develop?

Again we now see this government handing over the inspection of imported goods here in Sierra Leone exclusively to foreigners. Is it not enough for the foreigners to be handling inspection abroad? Should we continue to allow this foreign domination of our economy? When foreign nationals control everything what is it that will be left for Sierra Leoneans now? What then is the talk about development if all this government is determined to do is to make foreigners richer while the Sierra Leonean continues to be poor? Again we do not buy that rubbish that there are no competent Sierra Leoneans to do these things.

The point we want to make here is that this country cannot develop if this government continues to squander all the opportunities for our human resources to develop by handing them over to foreigners. In fact in our view it is criminally wicked given our extreme poverty for this government to heartlessly convert the opportunities open to Sierra Leoneans to foreigners to allow them to enrich themselves and go and build their countries at the expense of our people.

Indeed Sierra Leoneans outside of this country are now frustrated with this attitude and even those within are deciding to leave again, because of this mentality.

Let us say that in a few weeks we will be celebrating 44 years of independence. Therefore we believe that the slave mentality which we carry that everything the white man does is good should be abandoned. As Sierra Leoneans we must believe in ourselves otherwise we are doomed.

Human Rights Watch

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West Africa: Roving Warriors Recruited for New Conflicts Preventing New Atrocities Requires Ending the Cycle That Drives Regional Mercenaries

(New York, April 13, 2005) — Thousands of young men and boys, many of whom have committed atrocities while fighting in West Africa's brutal civil wars, face re-recruitment into the region's emerging conflicts, Human Rights Watch said in a new report released today. International efforts to disarm these fighters must provide them with alternatives to war.

Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, two countries marked by growing political instability, are the current theaters into which these young fighters are being drawn, according to Human Rights Watch.

The lives of these "regional warriors" are documented in a 66-page report, "Youth, Poverty and Blood: The Lethal Legacy of West Africa's Regional Warriors." Based on interviews with some 60 former fighters who have crossed borders to fight in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, the report explores the forces driving the phenomenon of cross-border mercenary activity in West Africa.

Since the 1980's, impunity and impoverishment have fueled a pattern of extreme violence in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. Time and again, these fighters—most of whom began their military "careers" as children after being forcefully abducted to fight with an armed group—are drawn into the region's conflicts. Many of these fighters have gone on to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity against civilians. Corrupt and repressive government policies, as well as arms dealers flooding the region with weapons, have given rise to further internal conflict.

"Breaking the cycle of atrocities in West Africa depends on disarming these fighters, demobilizing them, and providing them with alternatives to war," said Peter Takirambudde, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "Half-measures ensure that the international community will face new calls for intervention in the region's conflicts, long after it's too late to prevent new atrocities."

In the past year, well over two-thirds of the Liberian ex-combatants interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that they had been asked to join fighting "missions" in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Among those recruited to fight in neighboring Guinea, about half had been approached by commanders claiming to represent a fledgling Guinean insurgency,

and the other half by those claiming to be supporters of Guinean President Lansana Conté.

Just last month, a Human Rights Watch mission to Liberia found that hundreds of recently demobilized Liberians, including children, have been re-recruited to fight in Côte d'Ivoire since October. According to those interviewed in southeastern Liberia, they have gone to fight alongside militias associated with the Ivorian government.

These young fighters are victims as well as perpetrators of serious human rights violations, Human Rights Watch said. The report details how after initial recruitment into a warring faction they were submerged into a world of brutality, physical hardship, forced labor and drug abuse. And it shows how they emerged as fighters willing to rape, abduct, mutilate and kill civilians.

All of the combatants interviewed fought with groups that have, to varying degrees, committed serious human rights crimes against civilians, often on a widespread and systematic scale. The fighters interviewed by Human Rights Watch had fought with such groups as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Although these armed groups were responsible for killing, raping or maiming tens of thousands of civilians, the perpetrators have largely enjoyed impunity for the atrocities committed.

When the youth interviewed were re-recruited into subsequent wars, all were unemployed or living a precarious economic existence, and were motivated by the promise of both financial compensation and the opportunity to loot.

"We thought things would be ok, but they went bad again. There was no food," said one Liberian combatant, who had fought in wars across West Africa. "I had to feed my parents. The commanders said we could pay ourselves, which meant looting."

Most interviewed received at least part of the financial compensation offered by the recruiters, and all participated in and benefited from the looting and pillage of civilian property—itsself a war crime. Most described using the money to pay rent, school and medical fees for their extended family, and to engage in petty trading.

"The fact that war has become the only economic route for thousands of youth points to serious failings by their countries' governments," said Takirambudde.

International efforts to disarm and reintegrate former fighters into their home communities have so far had limited success, Human Rights Watch said. The report identifies problems in the U.N.-led disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The report details corruption by commanders and disarmament program officials who diverted benefits earmarked for their subordinates to themselves instead.

The young fighters interviewed for the report noted how these programs lack adequate grievance procedures to address corruption. They described how the shortcomings of the demobilization programs have greatly contributed to their decision to take up arms in subsequent conflicts.

The report also notes how a severe funding shortage in the Liberian disarmament program has left some 40,000 combatants at risk of missing out on job training and education, making them more vulnerable for re-recruitment to fight in future armed conflicts.