

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, June 02, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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Unity. Thursday June 02, 2008.

No limit to arrests

An ex-minister of government present throughout the deliberations in cabinet on the setting up of a special court for Sierra Leone has said that not even Satan with all his might at perfecting evil can promote the tale of the special court being the work of just one or two people.

He was reacting to our lead story of Tuesday May 31 in which three Ministers of government were listed among others as being contributive to the

No limit to arrests

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setting up of the court. Said the ex-minister, "what hurts me most about this government unlike the government of Siaka Stevens is the speed with which ministers always move to disassociate themselves from government policies especially when it is not emanating from their own ministries. It is very rare to see a minister acclaiming policies of his colleague during public meetings and on some occasions, questions that could be answered by any minister because of the origin of the issues in cabinet are evaded to reinforce signals that the man who initiated it should be the one to ask. The minister revealed that the time the special court issue was being discussed in cabinet there were not less than five eminent lawyers including the president himself, Joseph Dauda, Banda Thomas, Solomon Berewa, Charles Margai and one other he cannot now recall. "I cannot recall any suggestion from these

people that was rejected by cabinet. So what are people saying today? Are Sierra Leoneans also saying they did not ask for the setting up of the court after the Foday Sankoh massacre of innocent demonstrators in May? Was it just Berewa and Tejan Kabbah who sat down and cooked up the court idea. Dr. Kadi Sesay was at Lome. Did she not play witness to the rejection of the blanket amnesty by the international community? Are we now saying good bye to facts to win votes by distorting information on sensitive issues?", he asked. The ex-Minister revealed further that cabinet provided in its deliberations, a total autonomy for its operations - a firm commitment to the independence of the special court thus strangled Sierra Leone government's hold on its operations." You have not seen anything yet as even the ordinary

people who in one way or the other contributed to the perpetration of horrendous acts would be arrested very soon. The implications are that apart from the ex-combatants even Members of Parliament, Ministers, police officers and more could still be arrested. Nobody constructs a building like the special court for the trial of just nine people. Let no one think it is an instrument of intimidation or the silencing of political opponents as no one knows who next will be going there". The minister then moved on to a similar perception - certain quarters on the setting up of the anti-corruption commission, which, according to some people was created by President Kabbah to punish opponents. "Would you say that if the ACC were Kabbah's creation to eliminate opponents he would allow action to be initiated against Okere Adams? Did President Kabbah himself not issue

a public notice disapproving of the methods used by the ACC wherein respectable individuals are pre-judged by the way they are arrested and taken in for investigations" He said that what is criminal about all this is that these institutions, the special court and the ACC went through parliament where even he opposition APC welcomed their setting up. It is therefore criminal and outrightly sinful for anyone to lay blame for their outcome at the doorstep to win political favours. The request for the setting up of the special court was a collective decision of Government, in reaction to pressure from both the international community and the angered people of this Country. "Clean politics is decent politics lets play it that way" the ex-Minister concluded.

Awoko. Thursday June 02, 2005.

Revealed at Special Court...
How 3 pregnant women were disembowelled

By Betty Milton

At the Special Court, prosecution witness TF2-187 has disclosed how the Kamajors disembowelled three pregnant women in Gambia. Jong chiefdom. She explained that Bombowai who was the Deputy to Alieu Kondewa sent his boys to go and capture three pregnant women for sacrifice. These women were

taken to the Court Barray where they were tied up tight to the pillars." When they heard the sound of the Helicopter, they started to slit open the pregnant women, taking out the fetuses, chopped off their head and fixed them on a separate stick." The witness explained. "These sticks were then tied to another long stick

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Women were disembowelled

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which served as a flag. This flag was then erected on the junction leading to Matru." She maintained that they then saw the helicopter, which landed, and Hinga Norman alighted from it. Some of the boys who were there for initiation took the items containing medicines and foodstuff that were brought by Hinga Norman. These items the witness said were taken to the entrance of the initiation bush. "They again returned to the Court Barray where the corpses of these three women were lying. The Kamajors then smeared the blood of the three women on

their faces and then took the corpses for burial in one hole. After the burial, they came back singing that to get a medicine one has to be brave and that they have got their own medicine through pregnant women." The 28-year-old woman also said that the rebels captured her in 1991 together with her husband and her mother in Bumpah Ngao Chiefdom. She later escaped in 1998 when her husband was killed. She then went to her uncle in Gambia and when she arrived, there was initiation going on for the Kamajors that was done by Alieu Kondewa. The witness narrated that the boys

usually went to her uncle's farm to harvest his cassava without his consent. "My uncle reported the matter to Kondewa two times and on the third day, he sent his boys to go and arrest my uncle and he was taken to the entrance of the initiation bush where he was tied up with a cord. My uncle started screaming like a pig then the boys started melting plastics and they were drooping it in his eyes until he died. His remains were then wrapped up and they dug a hole and put it there." She stated.

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The Washington Times

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Power in exile: Taylor extends political reach

By Betsy Pisik

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Published June 2, 2005

NEW YORK - Pressure is growing in Washington and the United Nations to transfer Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone as accusations mount that the former Liberian president is working from exile to destabilize West Africa.

Officials with the U.N.-created war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone asked the Security Council last week to consider drafting a legally binding resolution compelling Nigeria, Mr. Taylor's host since August 2003, to transfer him to the court where he is charged with 17 counts of war crimes and related charges for arming and funding rebel militias during Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war.

In late April, Congress passed a bill demanding that Nigeria turn over Mr. Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

President Bush told Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo when they met at the White House in early May that the former Liberian president must be held accountable.

The Nigerian government remains reluctant to turn over its guest to the court, and officials say they have seen no credible accusations of Mr. Taylor's meddling.

To human rights groups and some U.S. lawmakers, that inaction is infuriating.

"There is no sense spending billions of dollars to rebuild Sierra Leone and Liberia, knowing that warlord is out there scheming to knock down everything we're trying to achieve," said Rep. Ed Royce, the California Republican who co-authored the bill.

Mr. Royce, an "absolutist" who said he opposed exile for Mr. Taylor in 2003, told The Washington Times he is satisfied that Mr. Taylor has dealings with Hezbollah, al Qaeda and other terror groups, probably through the sale of "conflict diamonds."

Mr. Taylor also is suspected of bankrolling parties in Liberia's upcoming October election and of encouraging coups in Guinea and Ivory Coast.

Born in 1948 near Monrovia, one of seven children of a descendant of the freed American slaves who created Liberia and a native tribeswoman, Mr. Taylor was drawn to the United States by school accounts of Liberia's history, and went to Boston under a student visa in his early 20s to study. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in economics in 1977 and became involved in Americo-Liberian politics among countrymen living in the United States.

Two years later, Mr. Taylor picketed the Liberian Mission in New York while President William R. Tolbert Jr. was visiting. Angry at first, the president reportedly came out to debate the young Mr. Taylor and ended up inviting him to return to Liberia, where Mr. Taylor was put in charge of the government's General Services Agency.

In April 1980, Mr. Tolbert and his entire Cabinet were slain by enlisted troops led by Sgt. Samuel K. Doe, a member of the Krahn tribe. It was the first time since Liberia's establishment in 1847 by black freedmen that the country's indigenous groups gained power

and native Liberians went on a rampage against the former ruling class -- Americo-Liberians, descendants of former U.S. slaves from many parts of Africa.

Despite his interest in Marxism and pan-Africanism during his college days, Mr. Taylor stayed with Sgt. Doe's tribe-based government for about three years. He vanished after being accused by Sgt. Doe of embezzling nearly \$1 million from the government.

In 1984, Mr. Taylor was arrested in Massachusetts on a warrant signed by Sgt. Doe, who was on friendly terms with President Reagan. The following year, while awaiting extradition to Liberia, he sawed through the bars of a second-floor laundry room and escaped from the Plymouth County Jail near Boston. He is thought to have fled to Libya, then a shrill foe of the United States.

Meanwhile, Sgt. Doe claimed victory in a disputed election as rival tribes struggled for control, and survived a 1985 coup attempt. An insurgency led by Mr. Taylor broke out toward the end of 1989. In late December, Mr. Taylor returned to Liberia at the head of several hundred guerrilla fighters who called themselves the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). After a series of victories, the NPFL attacked Monrovia, the capital, in July 1990.

During the fighting, the group split into two factions led by Mr. Taylor and a warlord calling himself "Prince" Yormie Johnson. By September, Mr. Johnson's group controlled Monrovia. On Sept. 9, 1990, Mr. Johnson tortured and killed Sgt. Doe in a gruesome episode captured on videotape and widely distributed.

Combat for supremacy between the Taylor and Johnson forces followed. A peace agreement was reached in 1995, leading to elections in July 1997. Mr. Taylor was elected president with three-quarters of the vote. His closest rival, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of the Unity Party, garnered less than 10 percent.

Recognized as Liberia's legitimate president in an election that foreign observers deemed fair at the time, Mr. Taylor continued to fight tribal insurgents. To finance his battles and weaken his tribal foes, he reportedly provided arms to rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone and Guinea, and sold weapons for diamonds.

It is not his role as financier and fomenter of a decade's civil war in Sierra Leone that worries observers and some governments, but rather Mr. Taylor's connection to new pockets of instability in West Africa's Mano River region.

Investigators for the U.N.-created Special Court for Sierra Leone, who have been gathering evidence against Mr. Taylor for a war-crimes trial, say that as recently as April he harbored al Qaeda-related operatives, plotted a coup attempt in Guinea and meddled in Liberian politics.

"He is a meddler, a terrorist and a war criminal," David Crane, the tribunal's chief prosecutor, told reporters last week, adding that all these activities violate the terms of his asylum.

"Until Charles Taylor is brought to justice, he will be an immediate, clear and present danger to the entire West African region," said Alan White, the special court's chief investigator. He added that Mr. Taylor might be working with al Qaeda.

The Nigerian government says it has no proof its terms of asylum have been violated.

"If anyone has evidence, real evidence, of these activities, they must send it to the federal government and we will investigate the matter," said Ndekhedehe Effiong Ndekhedehe, legal adviser at the Nigerian Mission to the United Nations.

Mr. White and Mr. Crane, Americans who were seconded to the tribunal by the U.S. government, say they have evidence to prove that Mr. Taylor:

- Was involved in a January coup attempt in Guinea, probably in retaliation for President Lansana Conte's support of an anti-Taylor Liberian militia.
- Harbored al Qaeda operatives who were involved in the 1998 bombing of U.S. embassies in Africa.

- Received al Qaeda couriers bearing cash, which he then turned over to a Liberian associate who has since declared his candidacy in the October elections.

- Continues to meddle in Liberia's politics, commerce and security.

Much of this information is corroborated or suspected by international nongovernmental organizations, such as the Washington-based Coalition for International Justice, which has compiled dossiers on Mr. Taylor's criminal activities and financial holdings.

Mr. Taylor's exile, negotiated with the Nigerian government by U.S. and British intermediaries as rebel armies advanced on Monrovia in August 2003, allows him to travel in Nigeria and to visit or speak with anyone he chooses.

Nigeria, the backbone of many peacekeeping missions throughout the region, agreed to give Mr. Taylor asylum provided he lives quietly and makes no effort to influence or destabilize Liberia or other countries.

But Abuja has resisted pressure to transfer Mr. Taylor to the tribunal, saying his exile can be ended only if a democratically elected Liberian government asks that he be tried.

That is unlikely to happen, say observers, who pin their diminishing hopes on a Security Council resolution under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter that would praise Nigeria's offer of asylum but condemn Mr. Taylor as a threat to international peace and security and call for his transfer to the Freetown Court, comprised of Sierra Leone and international judges.

The United States, Britain and the current council president of Denmark would support such a resolution, say U.N. diplomats, who note that other nations are far less keen.

The council did issue a press statement last week on "the importance of ensuring that all those who have been indicted by the court appear before it."

There is widespread speculation about why the Nigerian government is reluctant to rid itself of Mr. Taylor, who has been living in Calabar, near the coast. Human-rights advocates say African leaders are reluctant to contest his immunity because so many of them must answer for crimes. There is also speculation that Mr. Taylor has invested in Nigerian industries, which would make the government more reluctant to remove him.

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TAKE IT EASY

Defeat of Justice Undermines Peace, Security...Kofi Woods

The NEWS (Monrovia)

NEWS

May 31, 2005

Posted to the web June 1, 2005

By Monrovia

The Regional Representative of the Foundation for International Dignity (FIND), Mr. Samuel Kofi Woods, II says a defiance and/or defeat to international justice will undermine regional peace and security. It will perpetuate a vicious cycle of impunity and bruise the faith of ordinary people in the only means of redress of grievances.

Mr. Woods made these comments during a press conference held at the United Nations in New York while participating in the launching of the report entitled : "FOLLOWING TAYLOR'S MONEY: A PATH OF WAR AND DESTRUCTION" produced by the former Washington Post Reporter Doug Farrah.

Over the past one week, Mr. Woods has been holding consultations with the United Nations Security Council on issues of regional peace and security.

During his meetings in New York, he met with the president of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Denmark, Algeria, Argentina, Tanzania, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Gambia and other countries.

It is expected that the Security Council will be deliberating on the progress report of the Special Court in Sierra Leone among other issues.

Prominent on the agenda are issues surrounding the Special Court in Sierra Leone and defining ways to end impunity in the region.

Justice without finality and closure is injustice to the victims and perpetrators alike. Mr. Woods was responding to questions regarding the on-going discussions to bring Charles Taylor to justice.

He averred that it is in Taylor's interest to be accorded what many other Liberians and West Africans did not experience during his rule: due process and free and fair trials.

Mr. Woods commended the United Nations for the enormous investment in peace in the region, but warned that the peace process in Liberia must be approached with utmost caution otherwise, the country could reverse all of the gains made thus far in dividends of regional peace and stability.

He among other things, criticized the United Nations for its insensitivity to the issue regarding accountability and the mismanagement of Liberia's natural resources.

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