

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, July 05, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
Mariama S. Yilla
Ext 7217 / 7216

Standard Times. Tuesday July 5, 2005.

Fear grips Special Court witness

BY THEOPHILCUS S. GBENDA

Special Court prosecution witness TF1-072 in the ongoing trials of the AFRC, has expressed fear for his life and his family following testimony. TF1-072 requested the court to put in place security measures that would guarantee the security and safety of his family at all times.

While explaining his ordeal in the war, the witness stated that he was captured together with thirteen others by fighters of the AFRC/RUF.

The witness said that all fourteen of them were tied to a mattress and subsequently set alight and that while the fire was raging he was fortunate to escape.

Hell was raised on him however, when he was consequently recaptured by 'Colonel' Savage and amputated.

The witness earlier told the court that he had eight children and a large family all of whom were based in Kono.

The witness's fears were however allayed by the trial chamber assuring him that there were adequate security measures in place and that he could rely on the witness protection unit of the court for his security.

Since the Special Court started its trials a little over a year ago, there has not been any reported case of physical attack on any witness that had testified before it.

Witnesses are compelled to testify in secrecy and in rare cases where it is evident that a particular witness and his family are at threat as a result of testifying in the court such witness and his family are immediately relocated to a third country.

New Chief Prosecutor welcomes call for the surrender of Charles Taylor

Desmond de Silva, QC, the new UN appointed Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, is delighted by the launch of the "Campaign to End Impunity" by a coalition of over two hundred civil society groups in Africa, whose aim is to get Charles Taylor surrendered to the Special Court. Upon his appointment by the Secretary General of the UN, the British QC undertook to "strain every nerve and sinew" in his efforts to put the former President of Liberia in the dock.

In February the representatives of 25 countries in the European Parliament voted unanimously that Charles Taylor be surrendered by Nigeria. In line with that resolution, Members of the House of Representatives in the United States voted 421-1 and the Senate unanimously calling for the immediate transfer.

"Today we have the unprecedented coalition of 240 African civil society groups united by their commitment to ensure that Taylor be brought to justice at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The world is beginning to speak with one voice", says Mr de Silva. "It is now time for President Obasanjo to also heed this overwhelming call from all sides of the international and African community. They are united in the belief that Africa's Hitler should be called to account. Nigeria has already been presented with cogent evidence that demonstrates that Taylor has breached the terms of his asylum in Nigeria by remaining active in Liberia and West African politics. Next week the AU meets in Libya. This is a golden opportunity for the African Union to re-

flect world opinion and join with all others by issuing a resolution supporting Taylor's transfer to the Special Court. Or, are we going to see a deafening silence from the cream of African leadership?"

Charles Taylor faces a 17-count indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict in Sierra Leone. The charges include terrorising the civilian population, unlawful killings, sexual violence, physical violence, forced conscription of child soldiers, abductions, forced labour, looting and burning, and attacks on UN peacekeeping personnel.

The Prosecutor indicted Charles Taylor on 3 March 2003, and unsealed the indictment on 4 June 2003. Official copies of the indictment and warrant of arrest were delivered to the Nigerian government by the Court's Registry on 27 November 2003, and the International Police Organisation (INTERPOL) issued a "Red Notice" for Charles Taylor on 3 December 2003. Just over one year ago, on 31 May 2004, the Appeals Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone rejected a motion filed by attorneys for Taylor, who sought to have the charges against him thrown out on the grounds that Taylor was a sitting head of state at the time of the indictment.

The new Prosecutor said, "It is really highly amusing to think that Charles Taylor sent his lawyers to the Special Court to seek an order-in-his-favour, thus recognising the Court. Yet, he keeps himself out of the jurisdiction of the Court no doubt in the knowledge that the overwhelming evidence of the atrocities committed in Sierra Leone will be brought home to him."

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996. To date, the Prosecutor has indicted thirteen persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Two indictments were withdrawn following the deaths of the accused. Nine indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

Concord Times. Tuesday July 5, 2005.

"I resisted the Special Court"

...Solomon Berewa

Story: Sahr Musa Yamba

Vice President Solomon Berewa recently intimated Concord Times that he "resisted the Special Court."

The Vice President who was reacting to a question posed by Concord Times that he played a key role in the establishment of the Special Court which subsequently led to the indictment of Civil Defense Force (CDF) National Coordinator, Sam Hinga Norman replied "Norman and I are very good friends, we worked



Berewa -

together for many years. I resisted the Special Court, all I wanted was peace but the international

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"I RESISTED THE SPECIAL COURT"

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community were adamant that peace and justice should go simultaneously."

Berewa noted that late Foday Sankoh was granted amnesty and he came to this country with the

status of Vice President until 5th May 2000 tragedy when innocent protestors were killed at his Spur Road residence. "Johnny Paul Koroma was also working until the 5th May tragedy. It was only after that we knew we were wrong

to grant rebels blanket amnesty. It was President Kabbah who wrote to the United Nations to put in place a mechanism to ensure peace reigned, this gave birth to the Special Court," he said.

The Post. Tuesday July 5, 2005.

War crimes prosecutors meet in Freetown

The Second prosecutor's Colloquium, hosted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, provided a venue for all the Prosecutor's to meet and discuss the challenges facing the international criminal tribunals, as well as share success stories and best practices.

The Special Court's prosecutor, David Crane, was joined by Luis Moreno Ocampo, prosecutor of the International Criminal Court; Hassan Bubacar Jallow, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; and David Tolbert, Deputy Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The prosecutors represented the world's four major criminal tribunals working to end impunity for the most serious crimes that plague humankind, and to contribute to peace and the prevention of future crimes. The tribunals have been entrusted with the responsibility of bringing to justice individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The colloquium discussions determined that international justice is at a crossroads. To succeed in fulfilling the mandates and deliver justice effectively and efficiently, the tribunals are greatly reliant upon the cooperation of national states.

The commitment of national states and the international community will be measured

by their willingness to deliver indictees for trial, even if politically difficult. International criminal justice must apply to indicted fugitives such as Charles Taylor, Radovan Karadzic, and Ratko Mladic. To permit individuals accused of the gravest of crimes to evade justice would reinforce the culture of impunity that fuels conflict and atrocities.

Furthermore, investigations of the tribunals cannot be completed without open access to all areas and documents under investigation. Investigating teams cannot complete their missions unless granted permission to move freely and securely within the state/area of investigation and with the

cooperation and support of the nation state.

Fundamentally, the tribunals cannot succeed without the firm commitment of sovereign states to discharge their legal and treaty obligations. Treaties such as the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and other international agreements and conventions need to be compiled with. State cooperation the international criminal tribunals is one of the pillars upon which the future development of international law depends. The Prosecutors stated: "These tribunals have made great progress and set new precedent in international law."



Nigeria refuses to hand over Taylor

Sirte, Libya - Nigeria said on Monday it would not bend to pressure to hand Charles Taylor to an international court, saying that would contradict terms agreed for the former Liberia leader to leave power for exile.

A special Sierra Leone court, set up to try suspected war criminals from a civil war that killed 50 000 people in the impoverished nation of 5,4 million people, has asked the United Nations Security Council to help bring Taylor to justice.

The Security Council has blamed Taylor for fuelling war across West Africa, including in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where rebels hacked off limbs, burned civilians to death and forced drugged children into battle.

Taylor now lives in Calabar, Nigeria. The regional power has said it will act to hand Taylor over to the court only if Liberia itself makes such a request.

"Without substantiated new allegations against Charles Taylor since he came to Nigeria, we are being pressured, harassed, blackmailed, even intimidated and even threatened to hand over Charles Taylor contrary to the terms of his voluntary departure from his country," Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo told an African Union (AU) summit in Libya.

He said Africa should not agree to do anything to destabilise the "seemingly smooth" transition process in Liberia, which would have repercussions in the rest of West Africa.

"If there is no abatement of pressures and harassment and if it is considered necessary, we will come back to formally place the matter before the AU and ECOWAS (regional Economic Community of West African States) for decisions."

The Sierra Leone court says even from exile, Taylor remains in close contact with Liberian political, business and government figures and travels freely in West Africa.

It also said it had evidence Taylor had funnelled money from the al-Qaeda network to a man who later announced his candidacy for the Liberian presidency.

Obasanjo said it had been an international decision that Nigeria grant Taylor asylum in 2003 to help stabilise West Africa and end years of conflict in Liberia.

In May, the US House of Representatives passed a nonbinding resolution urging Nigeria to turn over Taylor to the special court in Sierra Leone that indicted him in March 2003 on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

REUTERS 

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Nigeria Rejects Calls for Taylor Handover

By Jeanette Goldman

Posted: 7/5/2005 3:26 AM

(Rapaport...July 4, 2005) Nigeria's government said on July 4 that it would not bend to international pressure calling for Charles Taylor to be handed over to an international court, reported Reuters on July 4.

The government said that handing over Taylor would be contradictory to terms agreed upon when the Liberian leader gave up his power for exile in Nigeria. The government said that it will only hand Taylor over at Liberia's request.

"Without substantiated new allegations against Charles Taylor since he came to Nigeria, we are being pressured, harassed, blackmailed, even intimidated and even threatened to hand over Charles Taylor contrary to the terms of his voluntary departure from his country." Nigerian President Ulusegun Ubasajo told and African Union (SU) summit in Libya earlier on July 4.

A special Sierra Leone court has asked the UN Security Council to help bring suspected war criminals to justice. Taylor has been accused of fueling wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone through illegal trading of arms for diamonds and other resources prior to his exile. More than 50,000 people were killed in these wars.

On June 21, the UN Security Council unanimously voted to uphold Liberia's diamond export sanctions for six months due to Liberia's inability to prevent illegal diamond sales from fueling war in western Africa.

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UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 4 July 2005

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International Clips on Liberia

04/07/2005 10:34:50

Nigeria says will not bend to pressure over Taylor

SIRTE, Libya, July 4 (Reuters) - Nigeria said on Monday it would not bend to pressure to hand Charles Taylor to an international court, saying that would contradict terms agreed for the former Liberia leader to leave power for exile.

04/07/2005 11:44:01

Push from abroad to bring Taylor to justice may hit African snags: analysts

By Lauren Gelfand

DAKAR, July 4 (AFP) - Pressure is building for African leaders to join a push to bring Charles Taylor to trial for war crimes, but analysts say the knowledge that any precedent may come back to them could forestall any African Union move on the issue.

"It's much ado about nothing; they are making this huge cry abroad but do you notice there is not much talk about Charles Taylor around here?" said Pat Lewis, a political science lecturer at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown.

"There is not, because there are too many people in power who know that if they raise their voices, it might remind others of their own unpleasantness."

International Clips on West Africa

04/07/2005 12:37:19

Ivory Coast militarizes west, Abidjan, with security squad and command cell

ABIDJAN, July 4 (AFP) - Ivory Coast on Monday appointed a security and defence squadron to administer the restive west and mounted a loyalist cell to thwart criminality in Abidjan, further militarizing the divided west African state in the wake of a new attempt at peace.

Local Media – Newspapers

African Union Urged to Pressurize Nigeria to Release Taylor for Trial

(New Democrat and Liberian Express)

- According to the Nigeria-based *Vanguard* newspaper, more than 300 civil society groups and non governmental organizations in Africa last week urged the African Union (AU) to prevail on Nigeria to surrender former Liberian President Charles Taylor for a war crimes trial in the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

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