

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Rebekka Ehret, Head of the Translation Unit, leaves on Thursday after more than two years at the Special Court.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as at:

Wednesday, 19 July 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Standard Times
Wednesday, 19 July 2006

What Ghadaffi told Sirleaf about Taylor

BY A. Y. KALLAY

The Libyan leader commented on Charles Taylor during the recent historic visit of the Liberian President Helen J. Sirleaf thus: "I do not sympathize with Taylor's internal policy and it does not concern me as an individual. It concerns the people of Liberia who elected your Excellency as their leader. But I am talking here about principles. I consider Taylor as having sacrificed his presidency for the sake of peace in Liberia because on the 11th August 2003 he voluntarily gave up power in favour of his vice and was then flown to Nigeria. The ceremony was witnessed by several African leaders including Thabo Mbeki and Obasanjo. Ending a civil war that lasted for 14 years".

He went on to note that as a result the war stopped and elections took place, which brought her to power and Charles Taylor dragged from his asylum in Nigeria and transferred to a court in Sierra Leone, which was out of the question when he gave power.

He advised that Africa must have credibility, and that those who were partners in this accord should have respected their word.

"Our brother, President O. Obasanjo offered asylum to Taylor in Nigeria for him to hand over power to his vice," he said, adding, "violating the right of political asylum is a very dangerous matter. This is a precedent which is very serious. Besides, the 'manufactured escape' and his arrest on the Nigerian/Cameroon border

made his matter more shameful. This is shameful and it is far from African manners."

He said he is sure Liberia and her leadership are not to blame, because these measures were taken by other parties, but stressed that it represents a dangerous precedent like that of Hissene Habre, the former President of Chad who is under threat of being

handed over to an international court.

He maintained that this is absolutely unacceptable, adding that he opposes the idea of Habre being tried by an international court of justice outside Africa.

"This is a disgraceful thing for Africa. I am against Taylor's trial in the first place. If Habre deserves to be tried, then he must be tried in Chad or elsewhere

in Africa, but not outside," he said, adding, "Your Excellency, we rely on your ability, personality, morality and courage to prevent these serious precedents, and I believe you will guarantee all Liberians a peaceful and democratic political dispensation. After all, Taylor is a citizen of your country, and you are responsible for your citizens."

Agence France Presse

Monday, 17 July 2006

First hearing for Taylor at The Hague on Friday

The Special Court for Sierra Leone will on Friday hold its first hearing in the case against Charles Taylor since the former Liberian president was moved to The Hague for security reasons, a court spokesperson said on Monday.

"This is a hearing to determine how preparations for the trial are going," court spokesperson Peter Andersen told Agence France-Presse.

It is not clear what exactly is on the agenda for the hearing which Charles Taylor could attend.

Judge Richard Lussick of the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone -- which normally sits in Freetown -- will fly to The Hague to preside over the hearing.

The trial has been moved to the International Criminal Court at The Hague to avoid any outbursts of violence in Sierra Leone or Liberia.

Taylor is seen as the single most powerful figure behind a series of civil wars in Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone between 1989 and 2003 which left about 400 000 people dead.

He faces a total of 11 charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and violations of international human rights and is specifically accused of aiding rebel groups which murdered, enslaved and mutilated civilians during a civil war in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbour. -- AFP

Xinhua

Wednesday, 19 July 2006

U.S. renews order on freezing assets of former Liberian leader

U.S. President George W. Bush on Tuesday extended an order on freezing the U.S. assets of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

Taylor's family and regime fellows are also subject to the order, which is due to expire on Saturday and was renewed by Bush because "the actions and policies of these persons continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States," the White House said in a statement.

Although Taylor is in the custody, Liberia's stability is "fragile," said the statement, noting he and his followers have left "a legacy of destruction that still has the potential to undermine Liberia's transformations and recovery."

Taylor was forced to exile in 2003 and is now jailed in The Hague, waiting for a trial for war crimes. He was accused of supplying arms to Sierra Leone's rebels who forced drugged children to fight and cut off people's limbs.

Source: Xinhua

Business Day (Johannesburg)

Tuesday, July 18, 2006

IS OVERLOOKING justice and reparations in favour of peace justified?

Or would it be better to prosecute and sentence all human rights violators, whatever the cost?

African and world leaders grappled with such issues two years ago when dealing with Liberia's former leader, Charles Taylor, whom the Economist described as "perhaps the vilest living African". In the name of peace, Taylor was offered a golden exile in Nigeria.

Questions surrounding the treatment of brutal leaders have again been raised, this time around Joseph Kony and his co-leaders in Uganda's rebel Lord's Resistance Army. Against the advice of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Ugandan government granted amnesty to Kony and his cohorts in exchange for a cease-fire. Uganda is adamant this will cement peace better than any ruling by the court could ever do.

The Lord's Resistance Army has for the past two decades been involved in a guerilla war against Kampala. Its more heinous acts allegedly include abducting children and turning them into child soldiers and sex slaves -- crimes for which the rebel leaders have been indicted, with international arrest warrants issued by the ICC.

While amnesty has its uses, it has raised eyebrows in this instance. Generally, amnesty is granted to remove a tyrannical leader, or so that an opposition leader who commands significant support and thus poses a threat to the state can be brought into a government's fold. Kony represents no such threat to Kampala. Apart from being elusive for the past 20 years and staging a reign of terror in Uganda's northern regions, his attacks have done little to destabilise the Museveni regime.

The rebel leader enjoys no popular support in the north and the fact that his army asked Kampala to supply its troops with food last week suggests it is in dire straits. Kampala had an opportunity to act decisively, to make an attempt to arrest Kony and hand him to the ICC to answer for his alleged crimes.

These are very different circumstances to those surrounding Taylor, for example. And even though he has found sanctuary in Nigeria and will not be prosecuted for the brutal war he commanded at home, Taylor will go on trial at the ICC for crimes related to the war in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

No person who has indulged in the kind of deeds that Taylor or Kony are accused of should be allowed to get off scot-free, whatever the quid pro quo. Amnesty in Africa needs to be used most sparingly.

Reuters

Tuesday, 18 July 2006

Clinton as Roving Ambassador for Liberia

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton has promised to be a roving ambassador for Liberia as the West African country tries to rebuild itself after years of war.

"I will do everything in my power to assist Liberia in her reconstruction drive," Clinton said during a visit to the country founded by freed black slaves from America in 1847.

"I will be a roving ambassador for Liberia without pay," he said, to rapturous applause from students and members of parliament who assembled to greet him at the Executive Mansion seat of government in the capital Monrovia late on Monday.

Liberia's society and economic infrastructure were devastated by 14 years of on-off civil war that ended in 2003 when a rebel advance and pressure from Clinton's successor George W. Bush forced President Charles Taylor into exile.

But under both Clinton and Bush the White House came under criticism from opponents who said it did too little to stem bloodshed in Liberia, which served Washington strategically during World War Two and throughout the Cold War.

Taylor is now in a jail cell in The Hague awaiting trial for war crimes linked to a related civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone, where he is accused of supplying arms to rebels who forced drugged children to fight and cut off people's limbs.

New President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first female elected head of state, faces the huge task of putting the wrecked country back together with help from donors.

Johnson-Sirleaf's government is trying to restore mains electricity and running water to Monrovia and other centres, at the same time as rebuilding a collapsed justice system and reviving mining and other industries ruined by the war.

"One way I can help Liberia is to inform the world about the progress made here," Clinton said.

Clinton also signed a memorandum of understanding with the government for his Clinton Foundation to help fight HIV/AIDS and support efforts to improve health services -- which are virtually non-existent in many areas.

White House News

Tuesday, 18 July 2006

Message to the Congress of the United States

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the Federal Register and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the Federal Register for publication, stating that the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons and prohibiting the importation of certain goods from Liberia are to continue in effect beyond July 22, 2006. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the Federal Register on July 21, 2005 (70 FR 41935).

The actions and policies of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and his close associates, in particular their unlawful depletion of Liberian resources and their removal from Liberia and secreting of Liberian funds and property, continue to undermine Liberia's transition to democracy and the orderly development of its political, administrative, and economic institutions and resources. These actions and policies pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons and prohibiting the importation of certain goods from Liberia.

GEORGE W. BUSH

THE WHITE HOUSE,

Maltatoday

Sunday, 16 July 2006

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2006/07/16/t18.html>

Biggest Trial at the ICTY

MATTHEW VELLA speaks to Judge Carmel Agius on the biggest trial ever held at the International Court for the Former Yugoslavia, and asks why bringing the wicked to the dock still doesn't deter war criminals.

Bringing the wicked to justice has been a tricky business for the past fifty years. Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb army chief responsible for the Srebrenica massacre is still on the run. People like Hitler cheated fate through death. Others like Stalin and Mao lived full lives. Idi Amin spent his life in exile in Saudi Arabia.

But the tragedy of the former Yugoslavia showed that living without justice for the atrocities of ethnic cleansing and genocide was unthinkable.

The trial of seven senior Bosnian Serb military and police officers facing genocide and other charges for crimes committed in Srebrenica, has begun at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). It is the biggest trial ever to be held at the ICTY and will be presided over by Maltese Judge Carmel Agius.

The charges against the accused relate to the mass murder and ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims from Srebrenica after the fall of the former UN safe haven to Bosnian Serb forces in July 1995. The ICTY has already found 47 accused guilty.

The massacre of more than 7,000 Bosnian Muslims during July 1995 will always be remembered not least with the belligerent advent of Ratko Mladic, greeting his officials and triumphantly claiming "On to Potocari", where following the Bosnian Serb take-over of Srebrenica, thousands of Bosnian Muslims, including women, children, and some men, fled, seeking protection, to the UN base in Potocari, just north of Srebrenica.

The ICTY is expected to finish the trials by 2008, although Judge Carmel Agius believes 2009 or even early 2010 is a more realistic scenario. There will be then an additional two years to dispose of all pending appeals following which the Tribunal will close its doors. The ICTY would have tried over 200 individuals by then, for the most serious crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. Thousands of victims and their relatives would have given evidence on the atrocities. As Judge Agius says, Europe has not witnessed since WWII and have the satisfaction of seeing justice done.

Getting down to work

By contrast to the special tribunals in Cambodia, mainly composed of local judges, and Saddam Hussein's trial before an all-Iraqi bench, the ICTY has come at a considerable cost and have proceeded slowly. However, it has been the most successful and unlike the Iraqi tribunal, it is not threatened with collapse.

“International justice comes at a considerable cost – there is no way this can be avoided and the alternative is to abandon the whole idea of trying war criminals because of the expense involved. This would be unacceptable,” Judge Agius says.

“Has it been slow justice? Yes and no. In one way the nature of the cases before the ICTY is such as to require interpretation and translation in English, French, Serbo-Croat, Macedonian, Albanian and Kosovar. Cases are complicated, involving mass murders, cruel treatment, forcible transfer and deportation of thousands of persons. Witnesses have to be transported to The Hague to give evidence, looked after because of post-traumatic problems, protected, and sometimes even relocated. The Tribunal does not have a police force of its own and relies on the cooperation of States and international institutions for conducting investigations which are inherently difficult and complicated. The Tribunal also encountered great reluctance to cooperate with it from some ex-Yugoslav republics. In fact only recently has a mass of information been made available. The problems such Tribunals encounter are enormous.”

And yet, the ICTY stands as one of the most formidable tools to bring to justice the indicted generals and officials who brought their wrath on Srebrenica. Since 1993, when the ICTY became the first international war crimes tribunal to be set up since Nuremberg, it has been followed by the UN Tribunal for Rwanda. Five other tribunals followed set up to deal with the atrocities in Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The International Criminal Court

The International Criminal Court is the world’s first war crimes tribunal, set up in 2002. Its reach is dependant upon the condition that the accused’s country of origin is unable or unwilling to bring the indicted to justice. Sudan for example claims it will bring to justice those responsible for Darfur and does not cooperate with the ICC. The US has vetoed the ICC because it does fears its soldiers will be politically tried for crimes, and in turn stopped its military funding to various signatories to the ICC, including Malta. The problems it encounters are various, and its success depends on the support of its signatories, and on cooperation with the its prosecution office.

“In this context, my opinion is that the ICC is in a worse situation than the ICTY in that at least the Tribunal enjoys the legal effect of the Security Council resolution that makes it mandatory on all States and entities to cooperation with the ICTY,” Judge Agius says. “The ICC has no such advantage. Where the ICC has an edge over the ICTY is that it starts off with a wealth of case-law that the ICTY and the ICTR have created in these last 13 years while the two ad hoc Tribunals had to start from scratch with no rules of evidence and procedure in place. When the ICTY and ICTR conclude their mandate the hope that international criminal justice will continue to be secured rests on the success of the ICC. The alternative solution would be more ad hoc tribunals but this is not the way the international comity of nations should be pursuing.”

Partial justice

Many claim the International Criminal Court’s tribunals tend to be politicised, perpetuating the bitterness of many of the tragedies they seek to deliver justice, by being perceived as an attempt for the West to impose its own morality.

For Judge Agius, nothing is further from the truth. The fact that the ICTY came into being following a unanimous decision of the Security Council, and that judges are selected by the UN’s General Assembly, originating from different regions, varying legal cultures and traditions with no vested interest in the affairs, past and present of the ex-Yugoslav republics, has ensured the highest standards of justice and fair trial.

“Rather than being an attempt by the West to impose its own concept of justice and morality, it is the response of the UN to the atrocities committed in ex-Yugoslavia and the first concrete international common front to send out the message loud and clear that the era of impunity in the face of such serious crimes is over. Rather than being an attempt by the West to prevent social and ethnic reconstruction, it is the determination of the international comity of nations to condemn and punish such evil concepts as ethnic cleansing.”

Does deterrence work?

Despite the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, genocide has continued. Not even the set-up of the ICTY prevented the Srebrenica and Kosovo massacres and ethnic cleansing, a frightening and ominous reminder of what man can do to man, even in the belief that they will never be brought to justice. Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic was one such man. But he died of heart failure before justice could deliver its final verdict.

What Judge Agius is sure of is that the crimes have never been allowed to go unpunished, despite the various problems the court encounters. But he also says the fact that one of the main purposes of punishment is deterrence is not in itself a guarantee that the same crimes will not be repeated, even when the most severe sentences are inflicted. The ideal at the ICTY, he says, is that the punishment imposed must in general have sufficient deterrent value to ensure that those who would consider committing similar crimes will be dissuaded from doing so.

“In reality, however, in the context of international criminal justice one of the main purposes of a sentence is to influence the legal awareness of the accused, the surviving victims, their relatives, the witnesses and the general public in order to reassure them that the legal system is implemented and enforced. Sentencing is intended to convey the message that globally accepted laws and rules have to be obeyed by everybody. The reality of the situation is that we have over a relatively very short period of time moved from complete impunity to the prosecution, convicting and sentencing of political and military officials of the highest level.”

United Nations



Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 18 July 2006

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]

International Clips on Liberia

Don't be ashamed of AIDS, Clinton tells Liberia

By Zoom Dosso

MONROVIA, July 18, 2006 (AFP) - 'Don't be ashamed of AIDS' was the message when Former US president Bill Clinton paid a lightning visit to Monrovia late Monday to launch an anti-AIDS drive in war-shattered Liberia. Clinton arrived early evening and left within hours after signing a deal with Liberian leader Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to fight HIV and AIDS which infect some 12 percent of Liberia's 3,2 million people.

Former US president Clinton commits AIDS funding to Liberia

By JONATHAN PAYE-LAYLEH

Source: AP WorldStream English (all)

Date: July 17, 2006

MONROVIA, Liberia Former U.S. President Bill Clinton committed funding to help Liberia set up a health care infrastructure needed to fight AIDS in the West African nation. Clinton signed an agreement Monday with Liberia President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as part of the anti-aids campaign by his Clinton Foundation, which seeks support and medical attention for those suffering from the killer immune system disease.

Mail & Guardian, South Africa July 17, 2006

First Hearing for Taylor in The Hague Friday

The Special Court for Sierra Leone will on Friday hold its first hearing in the case against Charles Taylor since the former Liberian president was moved to The Hague for security reasons, a court spokesperson said on Monday.

"This is a hearing to determine how preparations for the trial are going," court spokesperson Peter Andersen told Agence France-Presse.

International Clips on West Africa

British development secretary assures S/Leone of more aid

FREETOWN, July 18, 2006 (AFP) - British Development Secretary Hilary Benn told Sierra Leone this week it could count on Britain and the African Development Bank (AfDB) for post-war reconstruction aid. "We shall continue to be along with you," said Benn late on Monday, at the start of a two-day visit to the war-shattered west African country.

UN urges Ivory Coast to press on with divisive ID scheme

ABIDJAN, July 18, 2006 (AFP) - The United Nations on Tuesday urged Ivory Coast to press on with a divisive population identification scheme that started at the weekend after much delay, saying they hoped it would lead to an irreversible peace process. Gerard Stoudmann, the United Nations envoy on the Ivory Coast elections said he hoped the identification exercise would "stimulate an irreversible process".

Local Media – Newspapers

Bill Clinton Signs MOU with Liberian Government to Fight HIV/AIDS

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The Analyst, New Democrat, and Heritage)

- Former U.S. President Bill Clinton on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Liberian government to help fight the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the country. Monday's signing of the MOU between the former U.S. President and the Liberian government will commence the work of the Clinton Foundation in the fight against HIV/AIDS and distribute low-cost antiretroviral drugs in Liberia.

Lawmakers Intensify Bid to Succeed Speaker

(Daily Observer)

- Behind the scene maneuvers are taking place among opposition members of the House of Representatives to find a possible successor to Speaker Edwin Snowe. Already, lawmakers from the Unity Party are seeking legal action to punish Mr. Snowe for covertly initiating discussion to rescind diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China in favour of Taiwan.

Self-imposed Curfew in Nimba County

(Daily Observer)

- Residents of Nimba County have placed a self-imposed curfew in major towns and villages following constant reports of ritual killings in the county. The curfew runs from dusk to dawn and night-time visitors are in most cases advised to inform their hosts ahead of arrival time or either risk being denied entry or stand to be accused of being killers.

15 Playgrounds for Liberian Children

(The Informer)

- A U.S.-based organization, Youth Action International (YAI), and the Ministry of Youth and Sports on Friday announced a major partnership to build 15 playgrounds for children in communities across Liberia. YAI's Executive Director Kimmie Weeks and Deputy Youth and Sports Minister Marbue Richards have unveiled six locations where the first grounds would be built in October, this year.

Bangladeshi Engineering Battalion Constructs Playground in Saclepea

(Daily Observer)

- The Bangladeshi Engineering Battalion of UNMIL has constructed a playground for the Lamba Community School in Saclepea, Nimba County.

Public Works Pleads for US\$135 Million for Road Construction

(The Informer)

- Authorities at the Public Works Ministry have told donors that it would cost about US\$135 million to restore and maintain the national road network in Liberia over the next five years. The amount is a combination of preliminary estimates of funding needed by the ministry that was presented during the recent donor conference held in Monrovia.

Liberian Politician Urges UN to Stop Middle East Crisis

(The News, The Inquirer and The Analyst)

- A prominent Liberian politician, Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh, on Monday called on the United Nations to take immediate action to stop the Israeli-Lebanese crisis in the Middle East. Dr. Tipoteh said that if some urgent action is not taken now, the escalating conflict could degenerate into World War III.

UNMIL Pumps US\$1 Million into Liberia's Job Creation Initiative

(The News and The Liberian Diaspora)

- The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has pumped in US\$1 million to the Liberian Emergency Employment Program (LEEP) which was launched in Monrovia over the weekend.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

ELBS RADIO *(News monitored yesterday at 19:00 pm)*

Bill Clinton Signs MOU with Liberian Government to Fight HIV/AIDS

(Also reported on Star Radio)

STAR RADIO *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Police Destroy Drugs

- The Liberia National Police yesterday destroyed a huge quantity of narcotic drugs in Monrovia. Police authorities say the narcotics weighed one thousand six hundred and forty kilograms and cost more than three million Liberian dollars.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.