

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



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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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The Analyst (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 18 April 2007

Liberia: Sierra Leone Special Court Intrudes

J. Ebenezer Daygbor

The Special Court of Sierra Leone is said to be adapting strange operations that, according to observers, run contrary to ensuring regional harmony.

Latest emerging development evolving from steps being initiated by the war crimes court in The Hague, The Netherlands speaks of a campaign by the court to kidnap Liberians and force them into testifying against detained former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

Grand Cape Mount County Senator Abel Massalley told a press conference yesterday in Monrovia the Special Court's latest kidnapping of a former friend of former President Taylor, Daniel James (alias Jungle James), who is alleged to have been in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, to be taken to The Hague to testify against his former leader.

James was one of former President Charles Taylor's strongman who allegedly supplied him diamond. He is also reported to have commanded the Special Forces of Taylor's dreadful armed men.

Senator Massallay alleged yesterday that the Special Court in Sierra Leone is deeply involved in the disappearance of Mr. James, indicating that some unknown men took him to Sierra Leone.

According to the Cape Mount County Senator, Jungle James was kidnapped in the Lofa Bridge area, until it was later discovered that he was in Freetown.

"The reason of this latest move is yet unknown but many are of the belief that the kidnapping of Jungle James directly centers around plans by the Sierra Leonean Court to covertly create, torture and program witnesses in the pending trial of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor."

He further alleged that "there are reliable information from very credible sources, both in Europe and the United States, that the pending mission of the Special Court in Sierra Leone to Liberia is primarily aimed at conducting covert operations so as to secretly create witnesses who will be tutored and programmed to provide false testimony against the former Liberian leader."

Adjudging the information true, Senator Massallay noted, "We wish to outrightly condemn and detest these sorts of tactics, tricks and plots because they are in our view bad omen for justice and transparency, as far as the trial of former President Taylor is concerned."

It is not known whether such operations is done with the acquiescence of Liberian government officials, he notes: "Concocting these kinds of devilish plans with the sole objective of obtaining evidence only points to the facts that the Special Court may not have had the requisite species of evidence to indict former president Taylor," suggesting that if his assertion is true, then Mr. Taylor should be set free.

Observers view the allegation of Mr. Massallay as extremely grave and should, as such, warrant the attention of all Liberians, especially the Liberian government, if they do not have knowledge about the report.

The involvement of all, observers believe, is germane because such operations threaten the sovereignty of the country and also puts the lives of Liberians at risk.

They're extremely surprised by the revelation of the Legislator that people would come in the country at will and kidnap ordinary Liberians to be used against their former leader, who has been accused of committing heinous crimes against the people of Sierra Leone.

At the same time, many Liberians have thus far confirmed earlier revelation of Mr. Sando Johnson who, some time ago, indicated that the Special Court had orchestrated plans to have Liberians kidnapped and taken to The Hague to testify against Mr. Taylor.

In a related development, Senator Massallay has strongly spoken against the perpetual sanctions imposed on the country's diamonds and is urging the UN security council (UNSC) to remove the bottlenecks which has made it difficult for the government of the Liberia to sell the resources for post-war reconstruction of country.

He opined that the justification for imposing the sanctions on the resources was that proceeds generated from the sale were used to fuel the war in Sierra Leone. Sen. Massallay is meanwhile criticizing the continuous travel ban on some Liberian citizens for what he described as "without any justifiable legal reason."

Whilst Liberians anxiously await the proceedings into the case against the former Liberian leader, recent weeks have witnessed in Liberia the call by family members and other Liberians for the granting of visas to them by the court to witness the trial in The Hague, although there has not been any official response.

The Inquirer (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 18 April 2007

Liberia: "Jungle James" Kidnapped?

Morrison O.G. Sayon

The alleged kidnapping of Mr. Daniel James, alias Jungle James by some unknown men in the Lofa Bridge area has sparked serious concern among Liberians, especially citizens of Grand Cape Mount County.

Jungle James, one time confidant of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and a well-known diamond broker in the country was allegedly kidnapped by some unknown men from his Lofa Bridge residence on March 2, 2007.

Disclosing this yesterday at a news conference in Monrovia, Grand Cape Mount County Senator, Abel Massaley said that information gathered by the county's Legislative Caucus has revealed that Jungle James was kidnapped by some individuals and taken to Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Senator Massaley disclosed that though the kidnapers are yet to be identified, according to reports gathered by him, on March 2, 2007, two strange white men visited Mr. James pretending to be miners who interacted with him and left. He said few days later, the same men returned that time with a white jeep marked City-9 and took Jungle James away without the consent of his family. He said it was later on discovered that James was taken to Sierra Leone.

Sen. Massaley noted that reasons for the alleged kidnapping of Jungle James is unknown, but many are of the belief that the kidnapping of James is a clever machination by the Sierra Leonean Special Court to covertly create tutors and to program witnesses in the pending trial of former President Taylor.

"What is puzzling to us is that these people are not miners; they came from the Special Court and requested for mining documents from the Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy, a situation viewed with sinister motives," the Grand Cape Mount County Lawmaker averred.

Information gathered further by The INQUIRER revealed that Jungle James, who once served as the chief diamond broker for former President Taylor, consented to a request from operatives of the Court in Sierra Leone to testify against his former boss who is presently in The Hague awaiting trial.

According to our source, Jungle James, following the request from the Special Court, was immediately taken to Freetown by the operatives who are believed to be conducting covert operations intended to create witnesses to testify against the former Liberian leader.

Recently, a request was made by the Special Court in Sierra Leone to come to Liberia to do a certain job but it is not clear as to what type of work the Court in Freetown intends to do in Liberia.

According to Senator Massaley who chaired the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Relations, the Special Court was established in that sisterly country to address problems associated with the civil conflict and does not have any jurisdiction over Liberia.

"We have learnt reliably from very credible sources in Europe and America that the pending mission of the Court to Liberia is to secretly create witnesses against former President Taylor," he then, added.

Associated Press

Wednesday, 18 April 2007

Prosecutor says some witness identities in war crime trial to be secret

By: MIKE CORDER - Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands -- The identity of most witnesses who testify against Charles Taylor at his war crimes trial will be kept secret and some may have to move to new homes to escape retribution from the former Liberian president's supporters, the lead prosecutor said Wednesday.

Trial witnesses include former "insiders" once close to Taylor, said Stephen Rapp, chief prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

"People are fearful," Rapp told The Associated Press.

As a result, up to 95 percent of prosecution witnesses will likely be granted protective measures, including the right to use pseudonyms while testifying in court, he said.

After the trial, some may have to move to new homes to stay safe, he said.

"All witnesses could be at risk after testimony, but insiders particularly can be viewed as traitors who deserve punishment for their treason," Rapp said. "We have to deal with the potential for relocation of individuals."

Taylor, 59, is to go on trial June 4 on 11 charges, including terrorism, murder, rape, sexual slavery, mutilation and recruiting child soldiers. He has pleaded innocent and faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment if convicted.

Taylor was flown to the Netherlands in June amid fears that staging the trial in Sierra Leone, where the Special Court usually sits, could trigger fresh unrest in the war-scarred African nation.

The case, being heard in a courtroom rented from the International Criminal Court, is expected to last about 18 months.

Due to the complexity of convicting Taylor for masterminding atrocities carried out by rebels in the chaotic and bloody conflict in Sierra Leone, the prosecution planned to call witnesses to try to establish a clear link between Taylor and the rebels, Rapp said.

"At the end of the day, we think Taylor planned and knew exactly what was going on," said Rapp, an American lawyer who previously was chief prosecutor at the U.N. war crimes tribunal for Rwanda. In 1993-2001, Rapp was a U.S. attorney for the northern district of Iowa.

Prosecutors said in a pretrial brief outlining their case that after Taylor became Liberia's president in 1997, rebels carrying out atrocities in Sierra Leone were in almost daily contact with "White Flower," Taylor's residence in the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

In exchange for diamonds smuggled out of Sierra Leone, Taylor provided rebels with arms, ammunition, communication equipment, as well as alcohol, drugs and cigarettes, prosecutors allege.

Rapp said prosecutors would rely on transcripts of witness testimony at previous trials in Sierra Leone to prove atrocities such as rapes, mutilations and hacking off limbs.

But some victims would be brought to The Hague to testify, he said.

"There will be crime victims -- amputees, others who were involved," Rapp said.

Sierra Leone's conflict was notorious for child soldiers hacking off the limbs of civilians.

Prosecutors say Taylor's proxies in Sierra Leone deliberately recruited children because they obeyed orders so well, and rebels set up "Small Boy Units" and "Small Girl Units," which Taylor allegedly used for his personal security.

They were also used as guards in Sierra Leone's Kenema and Kono districts -- where hundreds of villagers were rounded up and forced to work at gun point in diamond mines operated by the rebels, prosecutors say.

The conflict in Sierra Leone also was characterized by widespread rape and sexual enslavement.

In Kono district, hundreds of women and girls were raped and beaten. Some were taken to camps where they were "distributed among the forces and used as sexual slaves and forced labor," prosecutors allege.

Defense attorneys are due to file a pretrial brief outlining their defense later this month.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 18 April 2007

Liberia: Taylor's Trial Faces New Hurdles

Britain was the first European country to agree to open up its prison facilities to Charles Taylor when he is convicted of the 11-count charges against humanity.

That agreement ended the permanent prison requirement of International Crime Court (ICC) in The Hague for the transfer of Mr. Taylor from Freetown in Sierra Leone.

Now Britain is wavering on its commitment, creating the likelihood of the permanent prison facilities requirement being brought to the front-burner of Taylor's trial that due in perhaps in three months.

The Analyst Staff adapts this online report of what is happening in London.

There are troubling indications that Charles Taylor's July 2007 trial may be thrown into jeopardy if the British parliament decides this week that it can no longer provide permanent detention facilities for him upon conviction.

Britain's commitment to the trial of Mr. Taylor by pledging to avail its detention facilities upon Taylor's conviction, amongst other things, prompted the ICC to accept the request of the Special Court for Sierra Leone for Taylor's transfer to The Hague for trial.

The British Lower House of Commons will this week debate whether to pass an emergency legislation allowing his detention here when it returns from its Easter break this week.

The Sunday Telegraph of London reported Sunday that Britain's offer to jail former Liberian president Charles Taylor if he is convicted of war crimes is in doubt because of the potential costs of his detention.

The weekly published details of a leaked government memo that highlighted the cost of keeping such a high-profile inmate in jail as "in the region of 44,000 pounds" (64,500 euros, 87,200 dollars) a year.

According to the newspaper, the memo states: "A possible objection to the Bill relates to the potential cost of imprisoning Taylor in the UK.

"Some may argue that, with the UK prison system heavily loaded and given the other demands on the UK taxpayer, it is not appropriate to commit government funds to imprison foreign nationals."

The memo also reportedly highlights the fact that Taylor may choose to stay in Britain after his release or claim asylum and that this "might represent a danger to the public or a drain on public resources".

It advises the government to argue that such commitments are not entered into lightly but by its action "the UK will be making a major contribution to the cause of international justice".

Taylor is considered to be the single most powerful figure behind a series of civil wars in Liberia and neighboring Sierra Leone between 1989 and 2003, which between them left about 400,000 people dead.

He has been indicted by the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and violations of international human rights.

He is accused of sponsoring and aiding rebel groups who perpetrated murder, sexual slavery, mutilation and conscription of child soldiers in Sierra Leone's civil war in exchange for a share in the lucrative diamond trade.

Britain Foreign Sec. Margaret Beckett said last June that London had agreed to a request by the former UN secretary Kofi Annan that if Taylor were convicted, he would serve his sentence in Britain.

Analysts say if Britain renege on its commitment to the process, and unless another country like Belgium or Finland that toyed with the idea of hosting a convicted Taylor, the ICC may have a change of heart and cancel trial plans in The Hague.

Such action, they say, is a high option, is likely to regenerate the arguments and obstacles that originally hampered the trial of Taylor.

For instance there are arguments that Taylor's trial in Sierra Leone, where is alleged to have committed untold atrocities, will not compromise his chances of fair trial but that it will also raise security questions.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 18 April 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

IMF sees Liberia growth surge urges debt relief

By Alphonso Toweh

MONROVIA, April 17 (Reuters) - Liberia's economic growth, already motoring at nearly 8 percent thanks to reconstruction after a civil war, will surge above 11 percent on average in the coming five years, the International Monetary Fund said. In a statement released late on Monday, an IMF team which visited earlier this month said however the West African country could not sustain its huge foreign debt, which totals nearly \$4 billion, and needed comprehensive debt relief.

International Clips on West Africa

There were no relevant stories on West Africa in the international media today.

Local Media – Newspaper

Senator Accuses UN-Backed Court of Kidnapping Taylor's Diamond Dealer

(Daily Observer, The Analyst, The News, National Chronicle, The Inquirer and The Informer)

- Addressing a "well attended" news conference on Tuesday, Grand Cape Mount County Senator Abel Massaley accused representatives of the Special Court for Sierra Leone of kidnapping Mr. Daniel James, alias Jungle James who is believed to be a long-time diamond dealer and a confidant of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.
- According to the Senator, he was kidnapped on 2 March 2007 in the diamond-rich Lofa Bridge area between Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties. He alleged that Jungle James is currently in the custody of the UN-backed Special Court and is expected to be flown to The Hague to testify against his former boss, awaiting trial on war crimes charges.

PUL and UNMIL Conclude Forum to Strengthen Liberian Media

(The Inquirer, The Analyst, New Democrat, The News and The Informer)

- The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) in collaboration with the United Nations in Liberia (UNMIL) on Tuesday concluded a one-day media roundtable conference. The forum which brought together government officials, media managers and other stakeholders was held to propose concrete initiatives for strengthening the media sector in Liberia.

British Parliament to Debate Legislation on Taylor's Detention

(The Analyst)

- The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor may be unlikely if the British parliament decides this week that it can no longer provide permanent detention facilities for him upon conviction.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

American Company Finds Valuable Diamond in Gbarpolu

- Speaking through its Secretary-General, Mr. Shedrick Wisner, the Gold and Diamond Workers Union alleged that a diamond valued millions of dollars has been found by an American Mining Associates in Gbarpolu County and was being camouflaged with the consent of Lands, Mines and Energy Minister Eugene Shannon.

- However, Minister Shannon denied claims that he was backing the illegal mining of diamonds in Gbarpolu, adding that the allegation was intended to tarnish his "*hard-earned reputation*".

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Lassa fever breaks out in the North of Liberia

- According to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare authorities in Monrovia, 5 persons have died of Lassa fever in Northern Liberia fearing that more deaths could occur in the area as a result. The head of the Emergency Response Preparedness Unit at the Ministry, Mr. Korsius Kollie said that the Ministry was deeply troubled about the rise in cases of the fever.
- In an interview yesterday, Mr. Kollie lamented that the lack of funds hindered the Ministry's respond to the outbreak of Lassa in Nimba, Lofa and Bong Counties. He added that a quick impact campaign to halt the outbreak of the fever has caused the Ministry more than US\$30,000.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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