

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



The UNMIL Mongolian Guard Force rotated troops on Saturday with a handover ceremony in front of the courthouse. See pictures of the event in today's *'Special Court Supplement'*.

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:

Monday, 28 January 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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BBC World Service Trust

Friday, 25 January 2008

By Abdul Rashid, at The Hague

RASHID: The first closed-door session of the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has opened in The Hague. The closed-door session is for a witness who does not want his or her identity disclosed to the public or to the media. Such witness has been given protective status. According to the Prosecution, witnesses under the protective status fear for their lives or the lives of their family. Rule 75 of the Special Court provides measures to prevent disclosure to the public or media of the identity or whereabouts of a victim or witness, a person related to or associated with him or her. The Defence team of Charles Taylor objected to the closed-door session of the protective status of the Prosecution's ninth witness and said they were not given prior notice. Queen's Counsel Courtenay Griffiths presented the arguments for the Defence.

GRIFFITHS: And consequently cannot be right, in our submission, for the Prosecution to rely upon a prior decision made by a completely separate chamber in which the accused was not represented, and I've had no opportunity to make representation, to rely upon that is effectively to exclude any right we might have to a fair trial in this particular regard. So it seems to us that the matter has to be addressed afresh before this particular Chamber.

RASHID: But Presiding Judge Teresa Doherty says the rule governing the Protective Status of witnesses appearing before the Special Court is not strange to the parties.

DOHERTY: The majority decision of the Chamber is that an order was made in Trial Chamber I on the 14th of June 2006 which ordered, *inter alia*, one, that the testimony of protected witnesses – and it includes Witness TF1-371, shall be heard entirely in closed session. The provisions of Rule 75(F) provide once protective measures have been ordered in respect of a witness or victim in any proceedings before the Court, such measures shall continue to have effect *mutatis mutandis* in any other proceedings before the Special Court, known as the second proceedings, unless and until they are rescinded, varied or augmented in accordance with the procedure set out in this rule, and the rule provides, *inter alia*, 75(J), that a party to the second proceedings, which is this proceeding, seeking to rescind, vary, augment protective measures ordered in the first proceedings shall apply to the Chamber seized of the second proceedings. We have not had any application to rescind, vary, augment put before us and therefore the provisions of the order of the 14th of June 2006 stand. In the light of the ruling, the Court will now be closed.

RASHID: The Prosecution's ninth witness is therefore testifying in closed session. A release from the Prosecutions' office says this protected witness will testify to the training of RUF members in Liberia, AFRC/RUF command structure, the accused's assistance to the AFRC/RUF including providing arms and ammunition from Liberia to Sierra Leone, among others.

Abdul Rashid for Search for Common Ground and BBC World Service Trust, at The Hague.

BBC World Service Trust

Friday, 25 January 2008

Contradictions From Witness

By Joseph Cheeseman, at The Hague

CHEESEMAN: The Defence of Charles Taylor has ended its cross-examination of the Prosecution Liberian insider witness Abu Keita, identifying some discrepancy between the Prosecution's previous interviews with Keita and Keita's present testimony. Keita told the court when he took up assignment in Buedu, the RUF territory in Sierra Leone, he did not meet with Taylor again. But the Prosecution's record read in court says Keita met with Taylor more than once in Monrovia.

COUNSEL: Mr. Keita, this is what you told the Office of the Prosecutor on February the 2nd, 2003. Abu said he didn't have much to do with the transfer of diamonds although he had been present on three occasions in 1999 with Mosquito when he had brought diamonds to Charles Taylor in Liberia. That is what you told the Office of the Prosecutor in 2003, correct?

KEITA: No.

COUNSEL: You said in 2003 that in 1999 on three occasions you accompanied Bockarie to Monrovia to meet with Taylor, did you not?

KEITA: No.

CHEESEMAN: The Prosecution insider witness testified that he took up his assignment in Sierra Leone with three bodyguards, but the Prosecution previous record before the Court stated a higher number of bodyguards. The witness said the Prosecution record was incorrect.

COUNSEL: Now I want to go back to how many bodyguards Benjamin Yeaten gave you before you left Monrovia. You told us they were three in number yesterday – true?

KEITA: Yes.

COUNSEL: But previously you have told the Office of the Prosecutor that he gave you eleven bodyguards, have you not?

KEITA: No.

COUNSEL: Did you take eleven bodyguards with you to Buedu from Liberia? Mr. Keita, this is what you said to Miss Dufka on June the 30th, 2003. 'Question: But did you go with your own security? Mr. Keita answers: Yes, I went with my own security. I carried eleven men. Question: Your own people? Answer: Yes.' Now Mr. Keita, that is what you told Miss Dufka in 2003, correct?

KEITA: No.

Keita also testified that Sam Bockarie flew to Monrovia from Foyia with a helicopter in November 1999, and came back to Sierra Leone with a Toyota Land Cruiser pickup given him by Charles Taylor. But the Prosecution record indicated that Sam Bockarie returned to Sierra Leone with the same helicopter.

On direct examination, Abu Keita told the Court he met Sam Bockarie on his way to Buedu to take up his assignment in Sierra Leone, but the Prosecution's earlier interview with the witness showed that Keita left Monrovia with Sam Bockarie.

Earlier the Defence accused Keita of planning a coup with former ULIMO-J leader Roosevelt Johnson to overthrowing the government Charles Taylor in 1998. But Keita denied and said he was jailed by Taylor for holding reconciliation meeting with Roosevelt Johnson.

The Defence in its cross-examination tries to impeach the credibility of the Prosecution's insider witness. Abu Keita is the second Liberian to testify against his former president, Charles Taylor.

This is Joseph Cheeseman reporting for the BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground, from The Hague.

Star Radio (Liberia)

Thursday, 24 January 2008

Taylor's defense sees discrepancies in testimonies

Written by Wellington Geevon Smith

The defence team of Charles Taylor has ended its cross-examination of Abu Keita, the prosecution's second Liberian insider witness.

The defense said there are some discrepancies between the prosecution's previous interviews with Keita and his present testimonies.

Keita told the court when he took up assignment in Buedu, the RUF territory in Sierra Leone, he did not meet with Taylor again.

But the prosecution's record read in court said Keita met with Taylor more than once in Monrovia.

Keita testified that he took up his assignment in Sierra Leone with three bodyguards but the prosecution previous record before the court stated a higher number of body guards.

The witness said the prosecution's record was incorrect.

On direct examination, Abu Keita told the court he met Sam Bokarie on his way to Buedu to take up his assignment in Sierra Leone.

The prosecution's earlier interview with the witness showed that Keita left Monrovia with Sam Bokarie.

Earlier the defence accused Keita of planning a coup with former ULIMO-J leader, Roosevelt Johnson to overthrow the government Charles Taylor in 1998.

Keita denied the claims and said he was jailed by Taylor for holding reconciliation meeting with Roosevelt Johnson.

Afrol News

Thursday, 24 January 2008

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/27796>

Special Court hails Taylor trial

afrol News, 24 January - The Chief Prosecutor of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), Stephen Rapp, on Thursday stressed the "historic" importance of the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in signalling an end to impunity, even at the highest level.

Taylor is facing 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. His counts include mass murder, mutilations, rape, sexual slavery and the use of child soldier. All the counts are connected to his role in the more than a decade-long civil war in the neighbouring Sierra Leone.

He has maintained his innocence to all the charges against him.

But Rapp told a news briefings in New Youth that the arrest and transfer of the former President "after he had been permitted to go into what was anticipated to be a safe and comfortable exile was precedent shattering in several respects.

"I think it has awakened many in the world to the possibility that individuals who might commit or be alleged to have commit similar crimes will in the end face a day of justice."

He described the case as "one of historic importance in signalling an end to impunity of individuals, even at the highest level."

Rapp said those involved in the process have been left with the challenge of making sure that Taylor is tried "expeditiously."

In 2006, the Security Council authorized the transfer of Taylor to The Hague for prosecution for reasons of security and expediency. His case remains under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Prosecutor Rapp said given the "excellent progress" of the trial, the case could be concluded between 12 and 18 months.

The trial resumed on Monday, January 7.

In a news conference held in Freetown, Mr Rapp said more than seventy Crime- Based Witnesses will testify in the entire trial. Eight expert witnesses, including one with knowledge of the diamond industry are set to testify on behalf of the Prosecution.

Taylor stands accused for crimes against humanity and violations of International Humanitarian Law in relation to his said involvement in the civil war in Sierra Leone which ended some six years ago.

The trial, which resumed on 7 January 2008, first started in June 2007 but was delayed by Taylor's refusal to appear in court and squabbles over his representation.

Judges are expected to deliver judgment of the trial in 2010 and upon conviction, Taylor will serve his sentence in the United Kingdom.

While some Sierra Leoneans see the trial as a victory against impunity, others argue that millions of dollars spent on the case was enough to console the victims of one of the most brutal civil wars which left many people killed, amputated and raped.

Taylor's cohorts condemned the trial, saying it is part of an international conspiracy perpetrated against the former rebel-turned-president.

His friends and family members held church services for his acquittal at the First Baptist Church in the suburb of Monrovia, praying for Taylor's acquittal.

By staff writer

United Press International

Friday, 25 January 2008

Death threats issued in Taylor case

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, Jan. 25 (UPI) -- The family of a key witness in the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor say they have received death threats.

The BBC Friday said Vamba Sherif, brother of former Taylor aide Varmuyan Sherif, was threatened directly and in leaflets distributed at the family compound in Monrovia.

Varmuyan Sherif testified at the war crimes trial at The Hague Taylor established safe houses in Monrovia for rebel fighters from the Revolutionary United Front traveling to Liberia from Sierra Leone.

Taylor is accused of exploiting regional conflict diamonds and funding RUF rebels during the 1991-2001 civil war in Sierra Leone.

Taylor is charged with 11 counts of crimes against humanity, war crimes, conscripting child soldiers and sexual slavery.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
25 January 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

World Bank President due in Liberia Tuesday

Heritage)

- The World Bank President, Robert Zoellick, will this week begin his first official visit to Africa including a two-day visit to Liberia on Tuesday. While in Liberia, the media reports that Mr. Zoellick's visit will focus on the development challenges facing the country and its efforts to promote growth, overcome poverty, and improve the Liberian people's living standards.
- Mr. Zoellick will talk to beneficiaries of community projects, meet with Liberian President Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson and participate in a roundtable with Finance Ministers from Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Togo to discuss the Bank's support to post-conflict countries and the lessons learned from its work in Liberia. He will meet with donor representatives; and discuss the Bank Group's contribution to private sector development in Liberia.

Varmunyan Sheriff's Relatives Get Security Protection following Death Threats

(News Democrat)

- Family members of prosecution witness Varmunyan Sheriff, who testified against former President Charles Taylor said security officers are now patrolling their vicinity following death threats from unknown individuals of reprisals because of his testimony.

Man Faces Prosecution for Power Theft

(The New Liberia)

- The State-owned *New Liberia* newspaper reports that a man identified as Ahmed Conteh is being tried at the Criminal Court "A" at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia in connection with power theft. The suspect supposedly built a box in which he normally installs a meter to illegally connect homes and business centers. The action follows a statement by the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) warning residents against power theft.

Lands & Mines Minister Says Arcelor Mittal will Begin to Export Liberian Ore by 2010

(The Inquirer)

- Lands, Mines and Energy Minister, Dr. Eugene Shannon said that the multi-million dollar steel company, Acerlor Mittal will begin it first shipment of iron ore from Liberia in 2010. Shannon made the disclosure on Wednesday when he appeared on Real TV phone-in talk show.
- Dr. Shannon said presently the company is carrying on an assessment in its areas of operations and is also in the process of refurbishing the train tracks which were damaged as a result of the civil conflict that ravaged every fabric of the Liberian society. The minister said the company is presently engaged in exploration to authenticate the quality of iron ore in those areas where there may be possible ore deposits.

Radio Summary

Special Court Supplement

MONBATT Handover, Saturday, 26 January 2008





