

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



Members of the Prince of Wales Secondary School band pose for a photo after their performance in the Ballanta Academy Music Festival on Friday. Centre, holding his trumpet, is William Lewis of CITS.

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:

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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International News

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Guardian

Friday, 14 March 2008

Charles Taylor told fighters to eat their enemies, court hears



Former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, at the international criminal court in The Hague, Netherlands. Photograph: Michael Kooren/EPA

A commander in Charles Taylor's militia has told a war crimes trial that the former Liberian president ordered his fighters to eat their enemies, including UN peacekeepers, as a means of terrorising the population.

Joseph "Zigzag" Marzah, chief of operations for Taylor who is on trial at The Hague, also testified that he oversaw horrific crimes such as cutting the babies out of pregnant women, and that the former president told his men that their enemies "are no longer human beings".

Taylor, 59, has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity at a special international court over his collaboration with anti-government rebels in Sierra Leone, which borders Liberia.

But in establishing the record of Taylor's leadership of a rebellion in his own country before he finally won power in 1997, Marzah this week described a reign of terror.

Marzah, who led the Death Squad group of killers, said many of the victims of cannibalism were members of the Krahn people of the then Liberian president, Samuel Doe, who Taylor was attempting to overthrow. But those eaten also included soldiers from UN and West African "Ecomog" peacekeeping forces.

"He said we should eat them ... Even the UN white people - he said we could use them as pork to eat," Marzah told the court. "We ate a few [Ecomog soldiers], but not many. But many were executed, about 68."

He said Taylor said eating people "set an example for the people to be afraid".

Taylor's defence lawyer asked Marzah how the fighters would "prepare a human being for the pot". The former commander described decapitating, carving up, cleaning and cooking corpses seasoned with salt and pepper.

"We slit your throat, butcher you ... throw away the head, take the flesh and put it in a pot ... Charles Taylor knows that," said Marzah.

He told the court how rebel leaders who fell out with Taylor met a terrible end. The former commander described dismembering the body of another rebel leader known as Superman and then taking his hand to Taylor who gave him "cigarette money" in return.

Marzah said the pair then cooked and ate Superman's liver.

Marzah said that he had killed so many men, women and children he had lost count. He described drowning and bludgeoning babies to death and murdering women with penknives.

He said that when he was serving with Taylor's rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia he had established checkpoints on roads using human intestines and severed heads mounted on sticks.

Asked whether Taylor knew about this, Marzah replied: "He was aware. He made us understand that you have to play with human blood so that enemies would be afraid."

Asked how he felt about these actions now, Marzah said: "I regret nothing".

Although Taylor is not on trial for those crimes the testimony that he encouraged barbaric acts will undercut his attempts to distance himself from rebels in Sierra Leone who he supported as Liberia's president and who were also responsible for crimes such as mutilation, mass rape and murder.

Taylor is accused, among other things, of laundering funds for the Revolutionary United Front by selling diamonds mined by forced labour and using the proceeds to buy weapons smuggled to the rebels in Sierra Leone.

Marzah testified that he took weapons stored at Taylor's presidential mansion and delivered them to Sierra Leone in return for diamonds that he brought back to Taylor.

The RUF was notorious for hacking the limbs off of civilians in the 11-year civil war that ended in 2002 after British military intervention.

Taylor was overthrown five years ago and fled into exile in Nigeria which handed him over to the special international court for Sierra Leone under pressure from the US and other countries.

Taylor's trial was moved to The Hague because of fears his presence in Sierra Leone could renew instability.

Reuters

Saturday, 15 March 2008

Death squads told to eat UN soldiers

MILITIAMEN were ordered to eat the flesh of captured enemies and UN soldiers, a former death squad leader told a war crimes trial in the Hague yesterday.

The grim tales of cannibalism highlighting the brutality of West Africa's civil wars emerged in testimony at the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor.

"He (Taylor) said we should eat them. Even the UN white people. He said we could use them as pork to eat," Joseph "ZigZag" Marzah, who described himself as Taylor's former death squad commander, told the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Taylor, 60, once one of Africa's most feared warlords, faces charges of rape, murder, mutilation and recruitment of child soldiers during a conflict from 1991-2002.

He has pleaded not guilty.

Marzah, a key witness into his second day of evidence, gave graphic details of atrocities in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and of a culture of violence and brutality.

Earlier, he said he had killed so many men, women and children he had lost count. He also described how he had slit open the stomachs of pregnant women on Taylor's order.

More than 250,000 people died in civil and cross-border wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Prosecutors say Taylor plundered neighbouring Sierra Leone's diamonds and destabilised its government by controlling and arming rebels.

Taylor's defence counsel challenged Marzah's evidence, asking him if he had approached prosecutors to escape punishment himself.

Asked how he prepared humans to eat, Marzah said: "We slit your throat, butcher you . . . throw away the head, take the flesh and put it in a pot. Charles Taylor knows that."

"Did Charles Taylor order you to eat people?" the defence asked.

"Yes, to set an example for the people to be afraid," Marzah replied.

Marzah, 49, is the 20th prosecution witness since Taylor's trial began in earnest at the start of January.

Marzah said he took weapons, some stored at Taylor's presidential mansion, to Sierra Leone and returned to Liberia with diamonds, which he handed to Taylor.

The wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone were particularly brutal. Thousands of civilians' limbs were hacked off by drug-crazed rebels, many of them children.

Taylor went into exile in Nigeria after he was overthrown in 2003, and was handed over to the court after international pressure was put on Nigerian authorities. Reuters

Rappaport News

Friday, 14 March 2008

Witness Says He Delivered Diamonds to Taylor

By Jeff Miller

RAPAPORT... ZigZag (Joseph Marzah) told the Charles Taylor war crimes court at The Hague that as a matter of practice, he would take weapons from Taylor's presidential palace in Liberia to Sierra Leone and return with diamonds -- which he gave Taylor personally.

Marzah, 49, is a key witness in the case which ties Taylor to using diamonds for arms during Sierra Leone's brutal war. Taylor has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes.

Taylor's defense attorney challenged Marzah's claims however by suggesting the witness only came forward in order to avoid prosecution.

Marzah testified for two days this week at The Hague. He also detailed direct orders from Taylor on how to chop-up and cook human victims. ``We slit your throat, butcher you ...throw away the head, take the flesh and put it in a pot. Charles Taylor knows that," Marzah said.

``Did Charles Taylor order you to eat people?" the defense asked.

``Yes, to set an example for the people to be afraid," Marzah said.

Mirror.co.uk

Friday, 14 March 2008

Liberian militia cooked and ate peacekeeping force

By Mark Dowdney

Opponents and peacekeeping forces were cooked and eaten by the militia of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, his war crimes trial was told yesterday.

Taylor's alleged Death Squad boss Joseph Marzah said cannibalism "was to set an example for people to be afraid". He told the Hague hearing nothing was done without Taylor's approval.

Taylor, 59, denies 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity while involving his forces in Liberia's civil war.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
14 March 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

Government's Relocation Plan of Culture Centre Stirs Public Debate

- Public sentiments expressed throughout the media suggest that there are mixed emotions about the government's decision to relocate the National Culture Center in Kendeja and lease the land to American billionaire Robert Johnson group of Companies desirous of constructing a four-star hotel.
- Some people supported the Government's decision while others thought that the relocation of Kendeja will destroy the cultural heritage of Liberia. Public reactions reflected in the Public Agenda newspaper said the government should have built a new culture center before concluding or breaking ground for the implementation of the 4-star hotel at Kendeja.
- The lease agreement, according to Information Minister Dr. Laurence Bropleh, will last for 50 years valued at US\$800,000 per year, and subject to increase or decrease as time progresses. Dr. Bropleh said the government has so far received US\$360,000 payment for the early lease which covers the period of three years. He said part of the initial three-year payment [US\$80,000] has been spent on purchasing 50 acres of land for the relocation and a temporary construction fund has been directed to the artists residing on the culture centre.

Senate Rejects Chief Justice's Request to Fence Supreme Court

(The Inquirer, Heritage, The News)

- The Liberian Senate rejected a proposed move by Chief Justice Johnny Lewis to further raise the fence between the Judiciary and the Capitol Building. Chief Justice Lewis in a letter to the Senate said he intends to raise the fence in question in order to secure the grounds of the Judiciary. But the Senate said the intention by the Chief Justice was unacceptable to the quest by Liberians to view the premises of the three branches of government.

UNMIL, UNHCR Donate Assorted Items in Lofa County

(The Informer)

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) made a joint donation of assorted items of domestic, sanitary, agriculture tools and a wheel chair to the Gondorlahun clinic, school and community in Lofa County.

Liberia Recommits Itself to Regional Peace As Ivorian Envoy Promises Good Relations

(Daily Observer, Public Agenda, The Inquirer)

- Defense Minister, Brownie Samukai has reiterated that the government of Liberia will not allow its territory to be used by any individual or group for subversive activities as was done in the past. Speaking Thursday when the newly accredited Ivorian Ambassador to Liberia, Elizabeth Toure paid him a courtesy call, Minister Samukai assured that the relations existing between the two countries would be furthered strengthened in the coming years.
- Earlier, Ambassador Toure said her government will continue to uphold good diplomatic relations with Liberia and underscored the need for Liberia and the Ivorian governments to work together for the socio-economic benefits of their respective citizens and residents.

PUL Host Memorial Day for Deceased Colleagues, Condemns Attack on UNMIL

(The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst, Heritage, Public Agenda)

- On the occasion of national Decoration Day, the Press Union of Liberia has announced a memorial service for all fallen journalists on Sunday, March 16. According to the Union, the service is to celebrate the contributions of the journalists to the growth and development of the Liberian media and the society. PUL says it will also use the service to pray for the families of the deceased. While remembering their deceased colleagues, the Union says it will invoke God's blessings for the protection of media workers in the performance of their duties in the face of challenges.
- Meanwhile, the Union has condemned the recent attack on some UNMIL personnel and vehicles and cautioned against using violence as a way to solve their problems.

CEMESP, Swiss NGO Embark on Media Research

(The Analyst, Heritage, The Inquirer, The News)

- The Centre for Media Studies and Peace Building and the Institute of Applied Media Studies of the Zurich University of Switzerland have jointly embarked on a research project on conflict journalism in Liberia.
- The two organizations according to a memorandum of understanding signed in Monrovia on Tuesday gives CEMESP the overall responsibility for supervision and coordination of all activities of the projects as well as the financial oversight of the expenses of the project in Liberia. A release quotes CEMESP's Executive Director, Malcolm Joseph as saying the research project which would last for a year is being coordinated under the scientific guidance of the Swiss-based group.

Taylor Ordered Us to Bury Pregnant Woman Alive and Kill Babies...Zigzag Marzah Testifies

(The Analyst, National Chronicle, New Democrat, Star Radio, Radio Veritas)

- One of the key prosecution witnesses, a former member of Charles Taylor's "death squad", Mr. Joseph Marzah alias Zigzag Marzah has given a detailed account of how the accused ordered the burial of a pregnant woman alive in the 90's and how he and others took part in several massacres in Liberia and Sierra Leone sanctioned by the former Liberian President.
- Marzah told the Sierra Leone Special Court sitting in the Hague how Taylor's chief bodyguard, Benjamin Yeaten carried out the Carter Camp massacre that occurred in Harbel, Margibi County in the 90's in which over 600 people mainly, women and children were killed. He also recounted the execution of former Armed Forces Revolution Council (AFRC) of Sierra Leone, leader Johnny Paul Koroma and other former allies who he said were killed for "betrayal".

Radio Summary

Local Media - Radio Veritas (News monitored at 9:45 am)

Suspects of Arson Attack against UNMIL Vehicles Appear in Court Today

- Sixteen persons recently arrested for an alleged arson attack on two vehicles belonging to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) are due to appear in court today .
- The accused were arrested on Tuesday, close to the mission's Logistics Headquarters, Star Base on Bushrod Island.
- Police authorities said court documents have already been processed for the accused to appear in court.
- The suspects are members of a group of former Independent Contractors (ICs) of the mission agitating for their "outstanding" salaries.

(also reported on Truth FM and Star Radio)

Former President Taylor "Death Squad" Member Testifies of Atrocities Committed by NPFL

- Testifying before the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague, a former member of Charles Taylor's alleged death squad said several massacres that took place in Liberia and Sierra Leone were sanctioned by the former Liberian President.

- Mr. Joseph Marzah alias Zigzag Marzah told the court how Taylor's chief bodyguard, Benjamin Yeaten, carried out the Carter Camp massacre that occurred in Harbel, Margibi County in the 90's.
- Marzah also recounted how Taylor buried a pregnant woman alive in 1995 and the execution of former Armed Forces Revolution Council (AFRC) of Sierra Leone, leader Johnny Paul Koroma.

Police Authorities Vow to Crack Down On Grave Robbers

- The Liberia National Police (LNP) says it has begun frequent patrol of the Palm Grove Cemetery in Central Monrovia.
- Deputy Police Spokesman, Lewis Norman said the force would be robust in enforcing President Sirleaf's directive calling for security at the cemetery.
- On Wednesday during the commemoration of Decoration Day, the President mandated the police to step up security at the cemetery to avoid criminals bursting into graves to fetch for valuables.

LAW Declares 2008 "Year of Reading and Writing"

- In an interview, the President of the Liberian Association of Writers (LAW) T. Michael Weah said there is a need for reading and writing to be emphasized in the Liberian school system.
- Mr. Weah said with the country's 20% literacy rate, more needs to be done to educate Liberian youth.
- He said his organization and the We-Care Library is declaring this year as a year of "reading and writing" as a means of encouraging citizens to read more.
- Meanwhile, the LAW President has lauded U.S. President George Bush for the donation of one million textbooks to the country but wants them to reflect on the values of the Liberian people and suggested the inclusion of Liberian books in the donation.

Star Radio Veritas *(News culled from website at 8:30 am)*

Liberian Refugees in Ivory Coast Opt for Resettlement to a Third Country – Cite Worsening Security Condition

- Several Liberian refugees in the Ivory Coast sustained injuries when some Ivorian security officers raided a United Nations compound to disperse protesting refugees. According to reports, the Liberian refugees had gathered close to the UN compound in Giglo to stage a demonstration, demanding resettlement to a third country due to worsening security conditions and social discrimination in the Ivorian society.

Controversy Brews over Government's Relocation of National Culture Centre

(also reported on Truth FM, Radio Veritas, ELBC)
