

**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 Outreach and Public Affairs Office**

**as at:**

Tuesday, 22 April 2008

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

Tuesday, 22 April 2008

# Ex-Liberian leader fails to show up at Taylor trial

*By Alphonso Zeon in The Hague*

**D**espite assurances that he would testify at the Special Court for Sierra Leone which subpoenaed him early this month, former Liberian president, Moses Blah failed to show up last week at the trial of his former boss Charles Taylor at The Hague.

Special Court's Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp told this reporter that he had been in touch with Mr Blah who had asked for more time because of medical considerations and his wife being out of Liberia.

"...we want to make sure the situation with his security, the situation with his family and his health are well in hand before he travels," Mr Rapp said, adding that they were following what he had been saying to the press one of which was that he was willing to be a witness in the Taylor trial.

Mr Rapp quoted Mr Blah as saying that he was neither for nor against anyone but that he was going to say "the truth". The truth, Mr Rapp said, would "serve the interest of justice".

The prosecution are offering Mr Blah as a witness "to prove our case and he's given us statements in the past and because we think that his testimony will be helpful to the Prosecution", according to the chief prosecutor.

The former Liberian vice president who became president after the resignation of Mr Taylor, faces a jail term if he fails to show up in court.

*This report is courtesy of the BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground.*

## BBC World Service Trust

Monday, 21 April 2008

Lawyers representing the former Liberian President Charles Taylor in his war crimes trial have lost a key motion to block new evidence of atrocities in Sierra Leone committed by the RUF and the AFRC rebels and blamed on Taylor.

As BBC World Service Trust/Search for Common Ground Producer Alphonsus Zeon reports, Defence lawyer, Morris Anyah's objection against admitting new evidence of atrocities in Koinadugu District, as contained in the testimony of Prosecution 23rd witness Alimamy Bobson Sesay, was overruled Monday.

Sesay said RUF fighters and their counterparts of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council burned down a village in Koinadugu and burned alive a Sierra Leonean government soldier captured during battle.

SESAY: Well, according to what I saw, he screamed to death. He was shouting because they hang him over - they hanged him over woods that were set on fire, so he was screaming... he burnt to death. We were there until he burnt to death.

ZEON: But Taylor's lawyer Anyah argued the new revelations were not part of the initial charges against Taylor by the Prosecution and should not be admitted in the middle of the trial.

COUNSEL: When I made the objection on Friday Ms Alagenda provided two bases, perhaps three, but two in particular that stood out. She said Rule 93, a persistent pattern of conduct, and she said widespread or systematic attacks vis-a-vis crimes against humanity, one of the categories of the charges in the indictment.

With regards to Rule 93, if your Honours look at that rule there are two conditions, or preconditions if you will: One, it speaks in the discretionary, that the Chamber may admit such evidence; two, it applies an interest of justice standard. The Prosecution has to make a showing. The Chamber doesn't just accept it orally in the middle of a trial. It has to be in the interests of justice and at the end of the day the Chamber still retains the discretion whether or not to permit it.

With respect to crimes against humanity... to say that this evidence is relevant to notice, placing our client on notice vis-a-vis the widespread or systematic nature of the attacks in Sierra Leone is misplaced. They have charged Kono District, they have charged Koinadugu District, they have charged the entire area around Freetown. All we are proposing is that any allegations of atrocities, as far as notice is concerned, be limited to those areas. The amount of atrocities and evidence they have adduced so far is large enough to place anybody on the face of the earth on notice. Why do they need to now go to Koinadugu District?

ZEON: To this, Prosecution lawyer Koumjian counter argues that these atrocities were related to prosecution allegation against Taylor and it was up to the Judges to use their discretion to admit the evidence.

KOUMIJIAN: Your Honour, the Prosecution notes, first of all, in the objection... All of these crimes are relevant to that fundamental element to all of these charges... Furthermore, because of the accused's position it's very important, it's a critical element in our case, to prove that the accused had notice of the atrocities that were going on and it is... Rule 93 I'm referring to regarding pattern evidence. It is our case that in fact the evidence shows that the atrocities that were going on in Sierra Leone were so widespread during the time of the indictment and also, critically for our case, prior to the indictment period, that

throughout the indictment period the accused, Charles Taylor, was aware of atrocities occurring by the RUF.

Furthermore, I think your Honours have seen in the evidence that we have presented and we will continue to present, it is our case that the RUF, which later allied itself with the AFRC, was a terrorist army created by Charles Taylor, controlled by Charles Taylor, created exactly in the image of his forces in Liberia which committed a pattern of terrorists acts and that all of this is relevant to the fundamental element of the intent of the accused, his notice of the crimes and his, in fact, intent that atrocities and terror be carried out in Sierra Leone.

So for all of these reasons we ask that the evidence be admitted. would note that your Honours are professional judges. The probative value of this evidence, which we believe is great, your Honours will consider.

ZEON: The Court agreed with the Prosecution lawyer Koumjian. Presiding Judge Theresa Doherty said though the atrocities were not initially included in the indictment against Taylor, they pertinent to the trial.

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## AfriNews

Tuesday, 22 April 2008

[http://www.africanews.com/site/list\\_messages/17660](http://www.africanews.com/site/list_messages/17660)

### **Moot Court Competition in S-Leone**

Murtala Mohamed Kamara

In keeping with its mandate to disseminate international Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Humanitarian Principles, the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) will host this year's National IHL Moot Court Competition for student in University colleges and tertiary institution of Sierra Leone. This is the first time ever that the National Red Cross Society is organizing the competition and the series marks the fourth Inter-collegiate contest on IHL in Sierra Leone.

The IHL Moot court competition is a training event on IHL intended for student and aiming at "taking law out of the books". During the competition, students are placed in a mock armed conflict situation.

Assuming the roles of prosecution and defense lawyers, they have to deal with allegations of violations of IHL and to argue their case before a panel of judges (confirmed experts in IHL). This exercise allows the student knowledge of this body of law while in the same time appreciating its practical relevance.

Altogether, six teams comprising three students from different universities and colleges across Sierra Leone among them the Njala University College, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, Fourabay College, International Institute of Islamic Studies, and the Northern and Eastern Polytechnics have been pre-selected to participate in the competition. The student will be judge on their knowledge of IHL and public International Law, their capacity to use the instruments of law to argue a study case, their team work and the quality of their oral expression. Whiles the case they will work on is purely fictional, they will face a panel of experts in a real court setting in the special court for Sierra Leone.

The pre-preliminaries begins on 5th and 6th May 2008 at the SLRCS fund raising center in Freetown culminating in a grand final at trial chamber II of the special court for Sierra Leone on 7th May 2008. The college or institution that emerges as winner will represent Sierra Leone at the 8th International IHL Moot court competition to be held in Arusha (Tanzania) in November 2008.

The International committee of the Red Cross (ICRS) initiated the National IHL court competition for university colleges in 2005 in Sierra Leone, within the frame work of its mandate to support the efforts of states in disseminating International Humanitarian Law. More than six years after armed conflict ended in Sierra Leone, the ICRC continues a gradual scaling down of its presence in Sierra Leone giving prominence to the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society in matters related to Red Cross activities in the country.

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## Inter-Press Service (South Africa)

Monday, 21 April 2008

Excerpt

### **Africa: Millions of Children Falling Through the Cracks**

Thalif Deen  
New York

-SNIP-

Radhika Coomaraswamy, the U.N. Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, says that in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) alone, thousands of children are victims of forced military conscription and sexual violence.

She says the positive news coming out of Africa is that with the conclusion of the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the number of child soldiers may have gone down: from about 300,000 to about 250,000.

But according to U.N. estimates, there is still an unacceptable number of children under military conscription -- mostly forced conscription and primarily in Africa.

Asked to what extent African nations themselves could be blamed for the current situation, Ali said that "most leaders and bureaucrats in Africa are responsible for the mess children are in today. They must take responsibility for this."

He said there are others who have directly caused untold suffering to children, and conscripted children to savagery, turning them into war machines.

"They must never be allowed to ever walk free again," he said. "I just came back from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote D'Ivoire where I saw firsthand what the conflict has done to children in these countries."

Charles Taylor (the former president of Liberia, now on trial before the International Criminal Court in the Hague), and all the other warlords, including some who are still ministers and parliamentarians in countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone, must be held fully accountable for their crimes against children and against humanity, Ali added.

He also stressed that "morally and ethically speaking, countries of the West must stop selling arms to the African countries".

"There can be no justification whatsoever for selling arms to African countries whose population is starving and cannot afford to care for its children," he added.

-SNIP-

## **UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 21 April 2008**

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

### **Newspaper Summary**

#### **UN Secretary-General Arrives in Liberia Today**

(New Democrat, The Monitor, Heritage, Public Agenda, The Inquirer, The Independent)

- U.N. Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon arrives in the country today at the start of a two-day visit. During the visit, Mr. Ban will assess the work of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and will meet with Liberia's Vice President and address a joint session of the National Legislature. The visit comes at a time President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is in the U.S. attending a church conference.
- However, Information Minister Dr. Laurence Bropleh said the highest level of government's delegation will receive the U.N. envoy. Mr. Ban's visit is the first since he became head of the world body but the second by a UN Secretary-General since the President Sirleaf's inauguration. His immediate predecessor, Mr. Kofi Annan, visited the country few days to the end of his tenure and was decorated by the Liberian government with one of the nation's highest honours.

#### **New Kru Town Residents Go Amok after Attempting to "Apprehend" Criminals**

(The News, The Informer, The Inquirer, New Democrat, Heritage, National Chronicle)

- The media reports that normal activities in the Borough of New Kru Town came to an abrupt standstill for several hours on Saturday when angry residents stormed the Magistrate Court in that area demanding police and court authorities to turn over to them a notorious criminal.
- The incident, which later degenerated into violence, forced several residents to flee the area, while shops and business centers closed to the public. The Inquirer quotes police sources as saying that the suspect identified as Raymond Kallor, is a notorious gang leader of a well-organized criminal syndicate that has been carrying out series of armed robberies in and around Monrovia.
- The News newspaper and New Democrat report that at least nine persons sustained bullet wounds after UNMIL military officers fired warning shots in the air to disperse the angry mob. The News further said UNMIL's spokesman Ben Malor confirmed warning shots were fired but that only "four rounds were fired into the air which succeeded in dispersing the crowd".

#### **Liberia Gets Major Debt Relief from Paris Club**

(The News, The Informer, The Independent, Daily Observer, Heritage, Plain Truth, Heritage)

- The Liberian government has announced that it had reached an agreement with its Paris Club creditors for a debt relief package, a Finance Ministry statement released last evening said. The Paris Club agreement follows the clearance of Liberia's arrears with the World Bank and African Development Bank late in 2007 and the clearance of IMF arrears and reaching of HIPC Decision Point last month.
- According to the statement, when the agreement with the Paris Club creditors is taken together with comparable debt relief from other categories of creditors, Liberia will eventually have more than 97% of its external debt stock cancelled. This package was said to have been negotiated in the context of the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) Initiative.

## **Robertsport Electrified after 20 years**

(The Daily Observer)

- The City of Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County, has for the first time in almost 20 years been electrified. Barely three weeks in advance of the upcoming Presidential Cabinet meeting to be hosted by this county, the challenge of bringing light to this very small city really nothing compared to what it would take to maintain it.
- When the news of electricity came, according to Superintendent Catherine Watson Khasu, over 300 citizens signed up for the utility. When, however, they learned that it wasn't for free, the number dropped down to about a handful. For now, the streets will be lit up at night, featuring a handy solar-to-battery backup system to conserve costly energy. For a small city with big dreams and an exponential amount of potential, it will take much more than this 60-kva generator to electrify homes and businesses. After the fuel runs out for the day, enlightenment must remain for the citizens and denizens to be inspired to proactively participate in the development of their city and their County.

## **UL Medical College, Cooper Hospital to Be Upgraded**

(Daily Observer)

- The A.M. Dogliotti College of Medicine at the state-owned University of Liberia (UL) and the Seventh Day Adventist-owned (SDA) Cooper Hospital are shortly to benefit from expertise and other materials from the Loma Linda University Medical Center based in California, United States of America. A.M. Dogliotti, which is the only medical college in the country, has since the civil war being plagued with numerous problems ranging from lack of professors to the lack of instructional materials.

## **Radio Summary**

**Star Radio** *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

### **UN Secretary General Arrives in the Country Today**

*(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

### **Youth Group wants UN Travel Ban Lifted on affected Liberians**

- The Progressive Youth for Accountability and Transparency has called on the United Nations to drop the assets freeze and travel ban on some Liberians.
- The organization said it would be better for affected Liberians to go through the due process of law than to perpetually keep them on the UN travel ban.
- Pro-Youth believes a reputable Organization like the UN must ensure that the rule of law is upheld at all time irrespective of status.
- The youth group observed that keeping the affected individuals on the travel ban and assets freeze list would run contrary to the preservation of peace in Liberia.
- The group however encouraged those affected by the travel ban and assets freeze to keep calm and cooperate with the United Nations.

### **Ghana High court sets date for ruling in Liberian refugees' case**

- Report from Accra, Ghana, says the High Court in that country would on Thursday April 24 hand down ruling into the case involving detained Liberian refugees.
- Lawyers of the coalition of human rights groups representing the detained Liberian refugees were in court when the decision was announced.
- One of the Ghanaian lawyers representing the Liberians Nana Oye Lithur presented legal papers that the Liberians in question must be set free.
- Madam Oye-Lithur argued that the detained Liberians were refugees in Ghana and needed to be protected. She further argued that if the Liberians had no refugees' status the Ghanaian government was under obligation to notify them in writing.

- But the Ghanaian lawyers counter argued that there was no war in Liberia, and that the status of the Liberians in question has been withdrawn. The detained Liberian refugees reportedly broke down in tears when the date for a ruling into the case was announced.
- Meanwhile, Star Radio gathered that a pastor of the Lutheran Church was arrested while visiting the Buduburam Refugee camp.
- Pastor Steve Ben-Naimah was reportedly detained by Ghanaian security forces while visiting members of his parish at the camp.
- A U.S.-based rights group monitoring the situation in Ghana has called on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to ensure the speedy release of Pastor Naimah.
- Universal Human Rights International argued that the detention and forced deportation of the Liberians violates International Humanitarian Law.

### **Bomi Supt recommends formation of community watch teams**

- Bomi County Superintendent Mohammed Massaley has recommended the formation of community watch teams to deal with armed robbery.
- Superintendent Massaley said once community dwellers hold together and become their brothers' keepers' armed robbers will have little chance of succeeding.
- He said role of these community watch teams is to create awareness by alarming whenever there are suspected robbers in their communities.
- According to Superintendent Massaley fighting armed must be a collective duty of all the community people, keeping awake when necessary.
- The Bomi Superintendent told Star Radio armed robbery was not prevalent in Bomi because training opportunities are regularly created for ex-combatants. He commended the Pakistani contingent of UNMIL in the county for creating training opportunities for ex-combatants.

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