

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



The historic Cotton Tree stood when the Freetown colony was founded in 1792.

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:

Monday, 7 April 2008

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

Monday, 7 April 2008

Prosecution witness admits killing at least one dozen people

By Betty Milton

Prosecution witness Issac Mongor in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has admitted killing at least one dozen people in Sandiaru village behind Kailahun town.

The defence counsel questioned the violent nature of the witness which he said people were accusing the witness for thereby leading to the killing of the 50 people.

But the witness denied by giving his estimation of killing about one dozen people who were trying to escape from Sandiaru.

Because of this the defence counsel told the court the witness was demoted by Foday Sankoh but the witness denied it stating that "I was not in any position at that particular time to say that I was demoted from a particular position. I was just a Front line commander at that particular time and the killing of those people was through an order, so I don't think I was called upon to come and to be demoted from any position. They did not demote me at all and I never went through such discussions with Foday Sankoh.

Issa Mongor admitted to the court that he was once investigated but it was based

on the particular subject of the killing of the people at Sandiaru but that they were about to kill him for a different purpose.

The killing in Sandiaru the witness disclosed was done in 1992 when he was acting as the battle group commander.

Questioned about him giving orders to other fighters? The witness denied as he said he was getting orders from above.

Giving reasons for the killing of the people who tried to escape the witness said "Those people came from Guinea. We had had instructions, because at that time we received information, regarding the border between Sierra Leone and Guinea and the area we occupied, that people were about to move from that side to attack our position, so we were on security alert and we had had instructions that anybody who was coming from that side, coming to our own side, we should deal with that person and we shouldn't spare the person's life.

So that was the area the people came from."

Stressing that they were dealing with fighters, "but civilians too had their own roles that they played, because normally it is civilians who come and take information and then carry those information to other people. So we as fighters, we knew that those are the things that normally obtain during a war." Digging into the command responsibility of the witness during the war it was disclosed through the witness statement, that Terry Munyard revealed that the witness was a training commandant in Liberia for all fighters who were to attack Sierra Leone".

That he came with the first team of fighters that attacked Sierra Leone in the beginning of the war and that the witness was also made battle group commander but that he was not next to Foday Sankoh.

BBC World Service Trust

Monday, 7 April 2008

By Alphonsus Zeon, at The Hague

ZEON: Defence lawyer Terry Munyard said Prosecution lawyers are paying for uniforms and school fees of children of witnesses and medical expenses of families of witnesses which have no relation to the trial.

MUNYARD: The Prosecution are perfectly entitled to reimburse genuine expenses that have been spent by witnesses – for example, travel costs, accommodation costs, in some cases security costs, the cost of a mobile telephone or a sim card, that sort of thing. Expenses that are legitimately made by witnesses in order to see the Prosecution authorities and assist them in giving statements. What in our view is completely illegitimate and taints the value of the evidence that the witnesses are giving, are handouts to witnesses for their families, for the assistance of their families to help them with school fees, school uniforms, medical expenses and so on.

ZEON: The Prosecution has rejected the contention of the Defence, saying the payments are intended to maintain the state of mind of the witnesses to testify in the trial. Special Court Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp, who spoke in a telephone interview from the United States which is not recorded, says we recognise that agreeing to testify may have negative consequences on either a witness or their family. Mr. Rapp said they may have to be relocated for safety reasons, and their children may have to transfer from a local mission school to a private fee-paying school, so in that case fees might be paid and uniforms purchased. Rapp said medical expenses are quite a common reason for payment. If you have someone who's dying of AIDS or they require drugs for an HIV infection, then you will obviously pay for treatment to keep them alive to testify, Rapp said on the line from the States. The principle, Rapp says, is that a witness should not be worse off as a result of testifying, but neither would they be enriched as a result of it. Another example which has [happened] is that someone who relies on the patronage of a person who is a Taylor supporter or at least hostile to the Special Court, loses their livelihood as a result of testifying. They would be entitled to compensation (for) losses genuinely incurred as a result of agreeing to testify should be reimbursed, Rapp said.

But Munyard said there also have been instances where potential witnesses have come to Defence asking them to pay them more than what the Prosecution can offer.

MUNYARD: Problems that we have encountered is that we are learning in a number of instances of people who are approaching the Defence offering to give evidence if the Defence will give them more money than the Prosecution is offering. Now we wouldn't countenance that for one second, but it just illustrates the appalling way in which the process of justice is undermined by witnesses being paid money over and above the expenses that they have legitimately made in the course of going to see the Prosecution to be interviewed.

ZEON: You don't seem to have sufficient money to pay them?

MUNYARD: If we had the money to pay them we still wouldn't pay them. All we will do is reimburse their legitimate expenses. We will not enter a bidding war with the Prosecution to buy a witness.

ZEON: But when you take into consideration the environment in which you operate in Sierra Leone and Liberia where you have poor people, if you intend not to give money to people who you want to testify, how is it possible you are going to get witnesses?

MUNYARD: Paying witnesses more than their legitimate expenses corrodes justice. It strikes at the very heart of the system that the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone claim to have set up.

ZEON: But Rapp says the Special Court has a specific rule obliging the Office of the Prosecutor to take all necessary care for the safety, support and assistance of witnesses. He says Rule 31 of the Statute request for payment advance to the Victim and Witness Assistance Section of the Registry that decides whether the payment is justified.

[Indistinct] last week say the continued cross-examination of Prosecution 21st witness Isaac Mongor. During cross-examination, Taylor's lawyer repeatedly accused Mongor of contradicting earlier testimony in which he had linked Taylor to the RUF. Mongor maintained last week Taylor formed the RUF, directed and funded its operations. Mongor's cross-examination continues this week.

This is Alphonsus Zeon for the BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground, reporting from Chamber II of the Special Court in The Hague.

The Analyst (Liberia)

Friday, 4 April 2008

Taylor's Defense Roars Over Key Prosecution Testimony

The long winded trial of the former Liberian leader is progressing steadily with various eventful episodes, especially now that proceedings are characterized by witness testimonies, after each testimony by prosecution witnesses, the defense rises to its feet to obfuscate the evidence by questioning even if the questions were said to be unorthodox.

Prosecution witness Isaac Mongor had his chance to say all that he knows about Charles Taylor's involvement with the RUF and other activities that the former leader carried out during the alleged bloodstained rebellious nightmares in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

With the testimony over, Mongor has fallen prey to a horde of questioning from defense counsels, who think that the testimony is both inconsistent and full of lies. After his testimony, he is being cross-examined by Charles Taylor's lawyers. They said he has lied about link between their client and the former RUF Chairman, Foday Sankoh. The Analyst jolts through what is gathered from the Trial Chamber's webpage.

Terry Munyard, one of Charles Taylor's defense attorneys, yesterday resumed cross-examining prosecution witness Isaac Mongor, attacking his (Mongor's) credibility, and saying that there were inconsistencies between Mongor's story and what he (Munyard) said really happened during the conflict in Liberia.

Also, he said, there are inconsistencies between Mongor's testimony and his prior statements to the prosecution. The cross-examination also raised questions about some practices in the Office of the Prosecutor in its dealings with Mongor.

Details of his position of the Mongor;s testimony Questioning Mongor's involvement with the NPFL

The defense spent considerable time focusing on the witness's account of fighting with Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in Liberia in 1990. The questions focused on several areas, including: the credibility of Mongor's claim to have been captured by the NPFL; where the NPFL conducted its battles; where Mongor had been and what he had done while with the NPFL; and how Mongor came to meet Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh and train RUF forces to fight in Sierra Leone.

Munyard questioned Mongor about where and when specifically Mongor claimed to have been abducted by the NPFL. After many questions and the aid of a map, Mongor stated he had been abducted in early December 1989 in a village in Nimba County whose name he didn't know, but which, he said, lies between Borplay and Logatuo, near the border with Ivory Coast.

Through a series of questions, Munyard elicited a timeline from Mongor about his movements in Liberia after his abduction. Mongor said after his abduction, he was immediately sent to Borplay, still in December 1989, for almost two months of military training.

From Borpleh, he said he had been sent to fight the Armed Forces of Liberia in Ganta in late January 1990, and that Ganta had taken just under a week to fall. From there, Mongor said he and other NPFL

soldiers advanced on the town of Gbarnga, where they fought for one night before the forces of Prince Johnson (of the Independent NPFL faction) retreated. After taking Gbarnga in January-February 1990, Mongor testified that he had been sent to fight in Kakata and Bong Mines in February 1990 - an operation lasting two weeks - before he returned to NPFL headquarters in Gbarnga.

From Gbarnga, Mongor testified that he worked as part of Charles Taylor's executive mansion guard, manning an anti-aircraft gun mounted in a vehicle when Taylor visited the front lines, including near the outskirts of Monrovia and Bong Mines.

Then he said that in March 1990, Taylor sent him to join Foday Sankoh and train RUF fighters at Camp Nama in Liberia. At first, he said there were few recruits, so he traveled between Camp Nama and Gbarnga, where he continued his duties as a member of Taylor's executive mansion guard.

But, Mongor testified, by the end of March 1990 there were many RUF recruits, and from that point he was permanently stationed at Camp Nama until he moved with the RUF to invade Sierra Leone in March 1991.

Munyard expressed disbelief that Mongor had done so much in just a few months between early December 1989 and the end of March 1990, and that the NPFL had advanced from the border with Ivory Coast all the way to the capital in just two-to-three months. Additionally, he asserted that Mongor was lying, because his account did not match what he said were the true facts. Namely, Munyard put to the witness that he was lying about the following: his abduction by the NPFL, because Mongor testified he had been taken captive by the NPFL between Borplay and Loguatu in December 1989, while Munyard asserted that the NPFL did not control that area until several months after they first invaded Liberia from Ivory Coast in December 1989; his training in Borplay in December 1989 because the NPFL training base there did not open until May 1990; because Mongor's account of living in houses at the training base in Borplay did not match what Munyard said to be the case: that the NPFL recruits lived in the surrounding forest during their training; because the name Mongor gave for his training commander did not match the names of the persons whom Munyard said were really the commanders; and because Mongor said he had been trained for less than two months, while Munyard asserted that all training at Borplay had lasted four months; the fall of Ganta, because Mongor said it had been in January 1990 and taken less than a week, while Munyard claimed fighting there lasted about a month, and that Ganta did not fall until mid-1990; the fall of Gbarnga, because Mongor claimed there had been fighting and casualties there, which Munyard said had not been the case. Rather, Munyard asserted, Prince Johnson's troops had abandoned the town without a fight.

Additionally Munyard suggested that Mongor was lying about fighting at Gbarnga because the NPFL had not taken it until January or February 1991, about one year after Mongor said he fought there; the course of the war, because Munyard claimed that in contradiction of Mongor's account, the NPFL did not advance from Ganta to Gbarnga, but rather from Ganta south to Tapeta and then to Buchanan.

Mongor replied that there were different groups in the NPFL and they didn't all move together serving in Taylor's executive mansion guard, because Munyard claimed that Mongor's description of the guard commander was not accurate, and that the guard commander had not taken that position until 1993, long after Mongor had left Liberia for Sierra Leone.

Further, Munyard claimed that Mongor could not have operated an anti-aircraft gun at the time because the NPFL did not yet have any. Defense also claimed that Mongor's description of Taylor's vehicle, a Nissan Patrol, was inaccurate because Taylor was using a bulletproof Mercedes Benz jeep at the time. Mongor insisted his account was accurate.

Munyard also claimed that Mongor was lying about being selected by Taylor to train the RUF. Mongor said he had been selected because after Taylor told the BBC that Sierra Leone would taste the bitterness of war - following ECOMOG jet attacks on the NPFL from bases in Sierra Leone - Taylor had been careful not to allow his special forces to engage in the RUF's training, instead seeking to disguise his support for the RUF.

Munyard suggested that Special Forces, those NPFL men who had trained in Burkina Faso and Libya, indeed had been involved in the RUF training, but Mongor denied this. Munyard also put to Mongor that Taylor had not given his statement to the BBC until November 1990, long after Mongor said he had left Gbarnga and was already training RUF recruits at Camp Nama, so that the BBC interview could not have been a reason for Taylor to select Mongor for the training. Mongor disputed that the BBC interview had been in November 1990.

Munyard asserted that Mongor had never guarded Taylor in the NPFL, but had been recruited to the RUF directly by Foday Sankoh, and joined because he believed in the RUF's objective to overthrow one-party governance in Sierra Leone.

Inconsistent prior statements

The defense questioned Mongor about discrepancies between his testimony and the notes that prosecutors and investigators from the Special Court took over the course of 24 separate interviews with him. In every case, Mongor stuck to the account of his testimony, saying that investigators may have misunderstood him, or arguing that the notes did not contradict his testimony. Specific examples included:

In one statement, investigators noted that Mongor claimed Taylor and Prince Johnson had lived at the training base at Borpleh at the same time. Mongor said this was not true - that he had never seen them together there. One set of interview notes recorded that Mongor said he joined the Liberian army in 1983, but Mongor said this was wrong, and stuck to his testimony that he had joined in 1985.

Interview notes said that Mongor "joined" or "became associated with" the NPFL, while in his first interview and in his testimony before the court, Mongor said he had been "captured". While Munyard said there was a large discrepancy between these terms, Mongor said that they were not inconsistent: that he had first been captured, but then had been a part of the NPFL and identified as such.

Interview notes stated that Mongor first met Foday Sankoh when he was introduced by his friend, and Sankoh's tribesman, John Kargbo, but Mongor had said at other times that he had earlier met Sankoh in Gbarnga. Mongor explained that he had seen Sankoh earlier, when he knew him by the name Pa Morlai, but that he had never really talked to him until the introduction by John Kargbo.

Interview notes reflected that Mongor had said that Foday Sankoh recruited him to train the RUF, but Mongor insisted that this was incorrect, and that Taylor had sent him on the training mission to Camp Nama. Munyard admitted that in later interviews, Mongor did say that Taylor sent him to train the RUF, but asserted he had only done this when it became clearer to Mongor that the prosecution wanted more information on a relationship with Charles Taylor.

Questions about practices in the Office of the Prosecutor

The defense raised three issues about practices in the Office of the Prosecutor with regard to this witness that could serve to harm the witness's credibility in the eyes of the judges. Munyard indicated that notes from Mongor's first interview with the prosecution stated that the investigator "went over" Taylor's indictment with the witness.

Munyard asked Mongor whether this happened before he was asked any questions, and Mongor testified that the investigator had explained the charges against Taylor before asking him any questions. Additionally, Mongor confirmed that investigators told him they knew he had been with Taylor prior to asking him any questions. Mongor agreed with Munyard's suggestion that he knew going into his first interview that the prosecution was looking for information on him and Charles Taylor.

Munyard asked whether in any of his 24 interviews, the prosecution staff had ever shown Mongor a statement from another witness, and Mongor said they hadn't. Later in the day, Munyard produced prosecution interview notes stating that another witness's statement had been "reviewed" with Mongor "for corroboration".

When this came up, the court went into a private session for 20 minutes at the request of Prosecutor Nick Koumjian, who said there was a problem regarding a witness protection issue. Back in open session, Munyard pressed the issue again. Mongor said no other person's witness statement had been read to him by the investigator.

Munyard noted that the interview in question had lasted three hours, but produced only three pages of notes, and suggested this meant that a lengthy document had been read to Mongor. Mongor said he did not recall any such document being read to him.

Through a series of questions, Munyard established that prosecution payments to Mongor for transportation, food and lost wages exceeded his actual expenses. For example, Mongor received 20,000 Leones (about six US dollars) following one interview for transportation and food, but his taxi fare had been only 900 Leones, and he hadn't been at the court during a meal time.

For several interviews on Sundays, Mongor received 50,000 Leones for transportation, food, and lost income, even though on Sundays Mongor said he would not have been working, so would not have lost any income.

Mongor testified yesterday and today that his business did not perform well, and Munyard suggested that he was testifying for the money after realizing that he could profit from the interviews. Mongor denied this.

Events in Sierra Leone

Near the end of the court session, Munyard began questioning Mongor about events in Sierra Leone following the RUF's March 1991 invasion from Liberia. Mongor testified that in 1993, Sierra Leonean government forces pressed the RUF all the way to the Liberian border, and that at the time; anti-Taylor ULIMO forces occupied Lofa County on the other side of the border. He said that ULIMO were enemies to the RUF.

Munyard suggested that by 1993 the NPFL were also considered enemies of the RUF. Mongor agreed that there had been problems between the NPFL and RUF in 1992, but said it was not a serious problem, although an order had come for the NPFL to withdraw.

Munyard asked Mongor if he had maintained communications with anyone in the NPFL during this period. Mongor said that once he had reported to Charles Taylor himself on activities and needs at the front by radio in mid-to-late 1992 when Mongor had been an acting battle group commander.

Agence France-Presse

Saturday, 5 April 2008

Sierra Leone ex-combatants make peace with victims

KAILAHUN, Sierra Leone (AFP) — Dozens of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone's 10 year civil war gathered Saturday for "healing ceremonies" to make peace with victims of the brutal conflict that left thousands dead.

"Small scale ceremonies have already been held in other parts in the district but today's gatherings are the most massive so far," said Beatrice Allie, one of the coordinators of the project which saw gatherings in various towns in the Kailahun District, some 300 miles east of the capital.

The project uses the traditional justice system to heal the wounds and hatred caused by the conflict in towns such as this one, which bears the same name as the surrounding district.

"The response has been overwhelming and does not have the trappings of modern courts like the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone where judges in robes and lawyers and other legal minds presides," Allie told AFP.

"Here, perpetrators are put before village elders, surrounded by a familiar environment where they ask for forgiveness," she added.

Dubbed the community healing ceremony, it was started by a local non-government group, Forum of Conscience.

"The choice of Kailahun District is significant," said the project's director, John Caulker.

"This was where the war began on March 23, 1991 when rebels of the Revolutionary United Front crossed into Sierra Leone from Liberia," he explained.

"It is the first time perpetrators are meeting face-to-face with victims as well as friends and relatives... to apologise for offences they committed during the conflict."

From the dense jungle, where wild grasshoppers and wild deer roam, dozens of men emerged, some with long unkempt beards, some in rumpled faded T-shirts, and looked around hesitantly before coming forward with halting steps to look their victims in the eyes.

Their victims stood listlessly as if daydreaming at first, while a few cried.

Abdul Sowa, a one-time farmer who now uses crutches donated by the local Red Cross, could not hold back tears.

"At last, they (the ex-combatants) have acknowledged their crimes," he said.

Town chief Mansa Musa of Bomaru, where the first shot was heard, was more circumspect.

"Here, we are not talking of who bears the greatest responsibility," he said, referring to those on trial at the Special Court, set up to try those accused of being the main perpetrators of the war.

Here, Musa said, "we are talking of those we know and recognised that they inflicted harm and did injustice to innocent civilians, mainly women and children."

Asked if these ex-combatants have been forgiven, he said: "What else can we do? Many of them are our kith and kin. We have no choice. God knows best."

A 35-year-old woman who was raped by one former combatant pleaded to onlookers: "I have two sons for him. Please forgive him. He has been good to the children, going to the bush to hunt for meat and providing food for all of us since the war ended" in 2002.

"I love him. Please allow him back into the community."

Elders occasionally broke into small smiles and shook their heads in apparent approval.

"Be at peace with every one as from now," the chief of the elders, Sulaiman Deen, told the men, who immediately bowed and left the scene.

According to Caulker, thousands of such "forgiveness ceremonies" are to take place throughout the country over the next five years, with funds provided by a United States-based foundation, Catalyst for Peace.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 4 April 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Census Workers Protest in Ganta

(The Inquirer)

- Tension is reportedly mounting at the offices of Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) in Ganta, Nimba County, over the payment of supervisors and census enumerators who participated in the recent census in the county. At about 9: 30, Thursday morning, the enumerators stormed the LISGIS offices in demand of their pay for services rendered.
- The aggrieved workers alleged that some higher ups at the LISGIS offices were trying to relocate boxes that contained relevant information on the census conducted in the area to take to Monrovia, when they have not received their money. The spokesman for the disgruntled workers, Emmanuel Y. Neenah, said that during the census week, they never received any money as incentives as was promised by LISGIS authority. The Inquirer reports that efforts to meet with authorities of LISGIS in the county was unsuccessful as the Liberian National Police (LNP) backed by the UNMIL Bangladesh soldiers stationed in the county barricaded the offices so as to prevent the boxes containing the census data from being destroyed or tampered with.

LEC Gets A Boost - Receives 7 Additional Generators

(National Chronicle, The News, New Liberian, The Inquirer)

- The Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) has received seven additional generators intended to boost the electrification of Monrovia and surrounding communities. Addressing a news conference in Monrovia yesterday, Mr. Yuan said these generators would increase LEC customers' base and that the second phase of the Emergency Power Program (EPP), which was launched in 2006, following the signing of a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the European Union, the United States Government through USAID, the Royal Government of Norway through the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the World Bank and the Liberian Government through the LEC amount to US\$25.2 Million. He said it is expected to expand LEC's services to the Liberian people.

Confusion Erupts at Senate over Credentials of Security Minister-Designate

(The Analyst, Heritage, National Chronicle)

- Confusion erupted on Thursday in the Senate over a controversy surrounding the academic credentials of National Security Minister designate, Anthony Kromah. Senators got entangled in a bitter argument after Mr. Kromah admitted to error in his educational credentials. During his appearance before the Senate, Mr. Kromah said he actually obtained a Master Degree in Counseling with emphasis in criminal justice, contradicting his curriculum vitae which suggest that he holds a Master Degree in Criminal Justice. The Senate security and intelligence committee had denied Mr. Kromah's confirmation on grounds that he lied about his academic credential and accused him of engaging in dubious acts by compromising National security, a claim Mr. Kromah has rejected.

Health Ministry reports outbreak of Yellow Fever

(New Liberian, National Chronicle)

- The Ministry of Health has reported an outbreak of Yellow Fever in Liberia. Deputy Health Minister, Dr. Bernice Dahn told reporters the disease was diagnosed on a thirty-two year old man, Joseph Tapeh who died in Nimba County. The Chief Medical Officer said specimen from him tested positive in Liberia and was confirmed in Darkar, Senegal. According to Dr. Dahn, one case of Yellow Fever is considered an outbreak because before it is confirmed, it may have already spread to several people. The Health Ministry has reported the case to the World Health Organization in accordance with International Health Regulations.
- The ministry has also sent its surveillance officers in Grand Gedeh and Nimba Counties where the disease has been traced. The surveillance officers will investigate whether the yellow fever case is the first or if it has already been transmitted to other people.

Radio Summary

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

President Sirleaf Leaves for London, England

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf leaves the country today for an official visit to London, England at the invitation of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.
- During the visit, the President will hold talks with Prime Minister Brown and participate in the “Progressive Governance Leaders Summit”. She is also expected to have discussions with the Chief Executive Officer of Mittal Steel, Mr. Lakshmi Mittal.
- An Executive Mansion release issued in Monrovia said the Liberian leader will also give a presentation at a Women’s Health Conference along with philanthropist Ann Gloag who supports Mercy Ships.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth F.M. and ELBC)

LEC Gets Additional Generator to Boost Electrification of Monrovia

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 8:35 am)*

Security Minister-Designate Faces Credentials Hurdle at Senate over Credentials
