

**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
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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Canadian Broadcasting Company

Wednesday, 30 April 2008

Putting a Price on Justice for Sierra Leone

Well in his time as President of Liberia, Charles Taylor earned himself a reputation as one of Africa's most brutal dictators. Today he's the first African leader to be tried for war crimes. He spends his days at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague in the Netherlands.

Mr. Taylor is charged with 11 counts of crimes against humanity for his alleged role in fueling a devastating civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone. The Special Court for Sierra Leone is a creation of both the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. Canada is one of its four major financial backers. Mr. Taylor's trial began in January. It is already beset by problems. The Court's administrators are worried that the money pledged to run the trial may run out before a verdict can be reached, and the Defence team says the Prosecution is undermining the trial by paying witnesses. Terry Munyard is the co-counsel for Charles Taylor and he's in The Hague. Hello.

MUNYARD: Hello.

You are defending Charles Taylor. He is charged with 11 counts of crimes against humanity. What are those charges?

MUNYARD: Well I won't list them all, but I could summarise them by saying they include crimes such as mass murder, pillage, rape, sexual slavery – exactly the sort of offences that you would expect to arise out of the war – either a civil war or an interstate conflict. I hope that summarises them.

And briefly, what is your defence?

MUNYARD: The case against Mr. Taylor is not that he committed any of these atrocities himself. The case against him is that he as, for the most part as President of neighbouring Liberia, supported a rebel movement in Sierra Leone, the country immediately to the north of Liberia. And he is being held responsible for many of the atrocities carried out by the rebel movement in Sierra Leone. And it's on that basis that he's being prosecuted, not that he ever set a foot in Sierra Leone or that he personally carried out, or even ordered, any of the atrocities, but that he was backing the rebels and agreed to their broad general strategy.

And you are saying he did not back them?

MUNYARD: Our defence is that there is no credible evidence that does link him with those atrocities, and so far a number of witnesses have been called to give evidence, some of whom are what are known as crime based witnesses, they talk of what happened to them, the terrible atrocities, mass rapes, the amputations, terrible amputations, of people's limbs by the rebels and indeed by other fighting forces in Sierra Leone. His case is that we do not challenge any of those crime-based witnesses when they say either they had these terrible things happen to them or saw them. And indeed we haven't asked a single question of these witnesses. The other broad group of witnesses are called linkage witnesses, and the Prosecution are calling them, seeking to establish this link between Mr. Taylor and the High Command of the rebel movement in Sierra Leone. And our position is that many if not all of those witnesses are being discredited in the course of cross-examination. It's very important the people watching this trial not just to listen to the allegations made as the Prosecution take the witnesses through, but to look at the whole of their testimony and see how in a number of cases it starts to fall apart after cross-examination.

Well let's talk about one of those witnesses. Who is Isaac Tamba Mongor?

MUNYARD: I'm not able at this stage in the trial to talk about individual witnesses, I'm afraid, but I can tell you that Isaac Mongor is someone who is claiming to have had either direct contact with people who were in direct contact with Mr. Taylor, or to have listened in to all sorts of conversations between Mr. Taylor and others in the rebel movement in Sierra Leone.

So he would be a linkage witness, as you describe.

MUNYARD: Yes.

But you have raised concerns about incentives that prosecutors have offered some witnesses, including Mr. Mongor, to testify. Can you tell us those concerns?

MUNYARD: Yes, I'm talking now in general and I'm not going to refer by name to any specific Prosecution witness. The Defence have been very concerned from the outset, partly because potential witnesses are approaching us in both Sierra Leone and Liberia and saying to us, 'Well we'll give evidence for you if you'll either match the money that the Prosecution are offering us or if you'll pay us more'. Now I'm not saying that that proves that the Prosecution are offering sums of money over and above what is legitimate, but there are too many of them coming up to us to say that for us to dismiss it. The position is this: that the Prosecution are perfectly entitled to pay proper expenses legitimately incurred by or on behalf of witnesses. Those expenses may be travel expenses, overnight accommodation, food and so on. If a witness unusually requires to be relocated from their home town or village for security reasons, and some of them have been well obviously the witnesses' new accommodation is going to have to be paid for, and in some cases it may be that school fees will have to be paid for the witnesses' children. But in a number of cases, witnesses are having their children's school fees paid for when they haven't been relocated and moved. Witnesses who become ill, it's perfectly legitimate to spend money on their medical care to make sure they're all right to give evidence. But when that starts to extend to their wider family, you begin to feel concerned that this is going to have an effect on the witnesses' ability to give impartial evidence.

There have been concerns raised that if the Special Court for Sierra Leone, that its funding may run out during the summer, it's a real possibility. What would happen if the funding ran out?

MUNYARD: I just don't believe that the funding will run out. If the pot empties, then somebody, somewhere, is going to have to find the money to carry on and to complete this trial and the other remaining trial that's running in the Court in Freetown in Sierra Leone. The Americans are very much behind this Court, and I would imagine they will ensure if nobody else does that the Court continues. I understand that the Canadian government is one of the major contributors to the Court, and I would expect again that the Government of Canada would not allow justice to be ill-served in that way by terminating trials part-way through because of a lack of money.

Okay Terry Munyard, thank you for speaking with me today.

MUNYARD: Thank you very much.

Terry Munyard is the co-counsel for former Liberian President Charles Taylor. He was in The Hague in the Netherlands.

Well to address the concerns he's raised, as well as the possibility the Court may run out of money before it can render a verdict, I'm joined by Binta Mansaray. She is the Deputy Registrar with the Special Court for Sierra Leone. She's in Freetown. Hello.

MANSARAY: Hello.

Well you heard our last guest. Do you think the way the witnesses are being reimbursed first of all is tainting the trial? What do you say to that.

MANSARAY: Well let me make it very clear that we have our witness protection policy supports both Prosecution and Defence witnesses. And as far as we know, we don't think witnesses are being paid, but if the Defence counsel has specific concerns he can bring it up in Court and that will be decided by the Judges. But so far, as he rightly said in part of his answer, is we facilitate the court attendance of witnesses and whatever that takes, because our policy is a witness should not have to suffer a loss of income or pay their transportation just because they have to give testimony in court. Again, the standard policy is what is offered to the Prosecution witness, what is required to facilitate their attendance in court, a similar offer will be made to the Defence witness in order to ensure that they are able to attend our court to help their case.

So do you think what he is saying is a bit of a red herring then, raising this as a concern of tainting the Court.

MANSARAY: Well let me make it very clear that this is not the first time that Defence counsel is raising such concerns. We have had trials in Freetown since 2004, and during the first year when the trial started, during the Prosecution case, Defence counsel also raised such concerns. But once the Defence case started and they saw that our Witness Protection Section was doing everything it can in order to ensure equal and fair treatment of all witnesses in order to ensure they go to Court in a sound and healthy mind, then we stopped hearing about those concerns. So it's not unusual to hear these concerns coming from Defence counsel during the phase of the Prosecution case.

I want to talk to you about the wider funding for the Special Court for Sierra Leone. How would you describe the current state of funding?

MANSARAY: Funding for the Special Court is unstable and uncertain, but we do make active efforts, Court officials make efforts to go to Europe and other parts of the world to solicit funding. Canada is one of the countries in 2006 that the President of the Special Court went to to ask for funding. So right now we have funds to see us through June as far as the available funds are concerned, but we do have pledges which may come in time to avoid a funding shortfall. If we don't receive those pledges on time, sometime in July, August we may experience a shortfall in funding.

And what would happen if you did?

MANSARAY: What would happen, we would count on the good will of the international community and member states would come up and see us out of the crisis. That's how we've been surviving since we were created in 2002 – we never had sufficient funding to take us through for six months.

So do I understand this, that you literally have to go knocking on doors and collecting money to keep this trial going?

MANSARAY: That's exactly what it is. We have to go, the Registrar has to travel, spend a good amount of his time, one third of his time, going around to embassies, countries asking for money.

Is this the way that other international courts have been forced to work? I'm thinking of the war crimes criminal charges against people in Rwanda, I'm thinking about accused war criminals being tried from the Balkans. Is this how they have to work as well?

MANSARAY: Well the ICTR and ICTY, they have a more secure source of funding, because they are dependent on the assessed contribution of the United Nations, so they don't have to worry about how their operational bills, how salaries are being paid. They have to concentrate on conducting judicial activities, whereas the way the Special Court was set up, it depends on the voluntary contributions. That's a difference. We have to go, as you rightly said, door to door, knocking, asking for money. These other courts don't have to worry about that, and we are the first court that was set up in that way. We are experimental and we are a Guinea pig. By all means, that's not the way to go.

And so what lessons are you hoping the international community learns from this?

MANSARAY: Well the lesson we are hoping they would learn is if you are setting up an international criminal justice such as the Special Court to address serious, serious crimes against humanity, there has to be some measure of stable funding, because again what we are faced with at the Special Court, we are under pressure to do it fast and do it cheap, but at the same time Court officials have to stay on the ground to be able to do it fast because we have to go around begging for money.

Okay, well Binta Mansaray, thank you for speaking with me today.

MANSARAY: Thanks a lot. Thanks for having me on your show.

Well that's Binta Mansaray. She is the Deputy Registrar for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and she spoke to us from Freetown, Sierra Leone.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 30 April 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

(New Democrat, Heritage, Public Agenda, The Informer)

UN Envoy Pledges Continued Support to Liberian Government

- The United Nations Envoy in Liberia, Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, has pledged continued UN support to the Government of Liberia, especially in the fight against crime. "Cases of armed robbery, mob violence, and rape still remain high," she observed. "And UNMIL has joined the Government and other partners to launch anti-crime and anti-rape campaigns across the country to deal with these challenges."
- She added that active community involvement and cooperation would be crucial for success in the fight against crime. "Together with the full cooperation and support of the public and communities we serve, we can succeed in dealing with these problems."
- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) made the comments at a medal parade during the weekend when she awarded UN peacekeeping medals to 165 military observers (MILOBs) and Staff Officers of various nationalities serving in the UN Mission in Liberia, (UNMIL).

Lawmakers Introduced Act to Make Armed Robbery a Capital Offense

(Daily Observer, New Democrat, The News, National Chronicle, Heritage)

- An act seeking to make armed robbery a capital offense has been introduced at the House of Representatives. The proposed bill spearheaded by Representatives Edward S. Forh, Elijah Sieh, Rufus Neufville and others have already been submitted to plenary.
- The draft Act called for amendments of chapter 14 and 15 of Liberian code of the new panel law to make armed robbery, terrorism and hijacking an unbailable offense. The drafters of the proposed act also recommended that anyone who is convicted of armed robbery; terrorism and hijacking shall be sentenced to life imprisonment with possibility of parole at the age of 90 years. According to the act, in the event of death during the commission of the armed robbery the convict should be sentenced to death by hanging or life imprisonment without parole.

Sixteen Armed Robbers, Drug Dealers Arrested

(The News)

- [sic:] Police in Monrovia Tuesday arrested 16 suspected armed robbers and drug dealers in the PHP Community in South Beach, Centre Street. The Deputy Spokesman of the Liberia National Police, Lewis Norman explained that the armed robbers and drug dealers were arrested as a result of the police "Operation Thunderstorm" which was carried out in the two communities. Col. Norman said four of the suspected armed robbers and drug dealers are women. He said one of the females was arrested with acid while two others were arrested with drugs. The police said the rest were nabbed from around ghettos in the area and that they were undergoing investigation to be persecuted later.

Treason Trial Verdict due Tomorrow

(Heritage, Daily Observer, New Democrat, The News)

- The media reports that Criminal Court “C” at the Temple of Justice will tomorrow, Thursday, hand down the final verdict in the ongoing treason trial involving retired Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), General Charles Julu and Colonel Andrew Dorbor.
- Lawyers yesterday ended final arguments with the defense and prosecution attempting to convince the Judge on why the defendants should or should not be acquitted.
- The New Democrat reports that Judge Peter Gbeneweleh yesterday reserved ruling in the case until tomorrow. During the November term of court when the first trial was held, a twelve-member empanelled jury found them guilty; but disorder erupted when this was announced. Defense lawyers accused the government of bribing the jurors. They later asked for a retrial which paved the way for this retrial. Retired General Charles Julu and Col. Andrew Dorbor were arrested in May 2007 in connection with an “alleged” plot to overthrow the government of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Radio Summary

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

Bureau of Immigration Set up New Regulation on Alien Residency

- The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) has cancelled all resident permits bearing 3 to 5 year duration.
- In an interview, Deputy Immigration Commissioner for Administration, Archie Williams said the Bureau would only issue permits to aliens for a period of one year.
- Commissioner Williams said the measure would enable the BIN to effectively monitor the activities of aliens noting that it would not interfere with the regional plan for the free movement of ECOWAS citizens.

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

TRC Vows To Maintain its Independence

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) said the commission will never be compromised by the conduct of any of its members.
- Speaking at the opening of the ongoing TRC public hearings in Tubmanburg, Bomi County, Chairman, Cllr. Jerome Verdier said acts that cast aspersion on the work of the commission or undermines its integrity would not be condoned.
- The TRC has of late been rocked by crisis following the suspension of Commissioner Pearl Brown-Bull for what the commission termed as “conflict of interest” which it says violates its Act.
- Cllr. Bull has since challenged her suspension and sought recourse with the Supreme Court which ruled in her favour.

10 Armed Robbers Appear in Court

- Police have sent to court 10 armed robbers arrested in the recently launched “Operation Thunderstorm”.
- The men are charged with armed robbery and gang rape.
- On their way to the magisterial court yesterday, they were jeered by onlookers calling for their immediate execution.

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

Act to Make Armed Robber Capital Offense Introduced at Legislature

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

BBC

Tuesday, 29 April 2008

ICC seeks DR Congo's 'Terminator'

A Congolese warlord known as "the Terminator" is being sought for prosecution, the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague has revealed.

The arrest warrant for Bosco Ntaganda, was issued in 2006 but not made public and he is still at large.

He is accused of conscripting children under 15 to fight in hostilities in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo between July 2002 and December 2003.

Judges say he reported to Thomas Lubanga, currently in ICC custody.

The arrest warrant for Mr Ntaganda is the fourth to be issued by the ICC involving fighting in the gold-rich Ituri region.



Both Mr Ntaganda and Mr Lubanga are accused of recruiting child soldiers

Training camps

ICC judges say as deputy head of military operations for the rebel Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (FPLC), Mr Ntaganda was responsible for seven camps where children were trained.

He is also accused of taking part in FPLC attacks when the group used child soldiers.

The FPLC, drawn from the area's Hema ethnic group, fought alongside Mr Lubanga's Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) against the Lendu ethnic group.

The violence broke out in 1999 and continued until 2003, partly for control of the gold deposits.

An estimated 50,000 people were killed and hundreds of thousands left homeless.

At different times, Mr Lubanga was backed by both Uganda and Rwanda - DR Congo's neighbours.

Under a peace deal, several Congolese militias have disarmed and been integrated into the national army.

Mr Ntaganda's arrest warrant was not made public before in case it hindered the court's investigations, the ICC said in a statement.

Mr Lubanga's trial is scheduled to start in June.

Voice of America

Wednesday, 30 April 2008

DRC Rebels Condemn Government Over ICC Warrant

By Peter Clotley
Washington, D.C.
30 April 2008

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the National Congress for the People's Defense rebel group led by General Laurent Nkunda says it has no confidence in President Joseph Kabila's government. This comes after the rebels accused the government of working with the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue an arrest warrant against one of the rebel leaders.

The ICC Tuesday issued the arrest warrant against Bosco Ntaganda, who is known as "The Terminator," for enlisting and training child soldiers and other crimes. But the rebels say the warrant undermines the recently signed ceasefire with the government, adding that they no longer trust President Kabila's government. Freelance reporter Jack Kahora covers the Democratic Republic of Congo for the Voice of America. From the capital Kinshasa, he tells reporter Peter Clotley that Congolese are worried that a lack of trust could be detrimental to the fragile peace in the North Kivu province.

"The fact for Congolese, and especially for those who are in the eastern part of the DRC where presently there is peace, is fear, because in January 23 2008, there was a peace deal which was signed. And it was signed because there were clashes between the government and the armed groups, especially the group that Bosco Ntaganda belongs to that is the group of Laurent Nkunda, who is well known. According to the people in northern Congo, they were sure that if they could keep silent for a moment and wait until peace can advance, they would have a kind of progress so that they can then launch such an arrest warrant," he noted.

Kahora concurs that an arrest warrant against the rebels could hamper the fragile peace currently being enjoyed by the people in North Kivu province.

"Really this seems to now block the peace process, which has been launched in North Kivu in January," he said.

Kahora said the rebels hinted to him that they have no confidence in President Kabila's government over the arrest warrants.

"According to the people that I talked to, they seem to show that they are no more confident in the government. They said that in fact, the government should react because the government of Congo launched a peace process and it should support it to the end. According to the rebels, it is as if the government itself is co-operating with the ICC so that those groups can be arrested," Kahora pointed out.

He said the rebels are apprehensive that any promises made to them would be to their detriment and would raise their insecurity.

"The rebels think that even if they were promised amnesty, this doesn't grant them any guarantee...that they can be arrested later. There is a fear that their situation may be affected by the ICC later on, so they are no longer confident in the government and the peace process they signed," he said.

UN News Centre
Monday, 28 April 2008

Kosovo duo facing trial at UN tribunal over alleged intimidation of witness

28 April 2008 – Kosovo’s ex-minister for culture, youth and sport and a former newspaper editor will appear tomorrow before the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) after being charged with contempt of court for allegedly trying to intimidate a witness in a war crimes trial.

Astrit Haraqija and Bajrush Morina are accused by prosecutors – in an indictment filed in January and made public by the ICTY on Friday – of attempting to persuade a protected witness with the codename PW not to testify against Ramush Haradinaj, the former prime minister of Kosovo.

Mr. Haradinaj, who was a prominent commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) during the conflict with Serb forces in 1998-99, was acquitted by the ICTY earlier this month of a series of charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, torture, abduction, cruel treatment, imprisonment and the forced deportation of Serbian and Kosovar Roma civilians.

When they announced the verdict, the judges said the tribunal had encountered many difficulties in securing testimony from witnesses during the trials of Mr. Haradinaj and his two co-accused.

The indictment released on Friday states that Mr. Haraqija, a former minister of culture, youth and sport in Kosovo, was one of the three co-founders of the “Defence Committee for Ramush Haradinaj.” Mr. Morina was his employee, working as a political adviser, and then also as a part-time editor at Bota Sot, a Kosovo newspaper.

PW was granted protective measures in 2005 and early last year his unredacted witness statements were disclosed by prosecutors to the defence teams of Mr. Haradinaj and his co-accused.

The indictment alleges that after learning of the identity of the witness last July, Mr. Haraqija instructed Mr. Morina to travel to PW’s country of residence to persuade him not to testify, and that Mr. Morina met with the witness on 10-11 July in a trip paid for by the ministry.

PW eventually did testify at the trial, according to the indictment.

Meanwhile, a former senior Bosnian Croat figure, Jadranko Prlić, facing trial on war crimes charges has been granted temporary provisional leave by the ICTY on humanitarian grounds. On Friday the tribunal agreed to release Mr. Prlić until the start of his defence case, scheduled for Monday.

Mr. Prlic and five other co-accused, all former high-level leaders in the Bosnian Croat wartime entity known as Herceg-Bosna, stand accused of war crimes committed in 1992 and 1993 against Bosnian Muslims and other non-Croats in south-western and central Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially the municipalities of Prozor, Gornji Vakuf, Jablanica, Mostar, Ljubuški, Stolac, Capljina and Vareš.

The many charges include murder, rape, unlawful deportation, imprisonment, cruel treatment, unlawful labour, the wanton destruction of cities, towns and villages, and persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds.