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:

Wednesday, 7 May 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday. Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact Martin Royston-Wright Ext 7217
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Ex-child soldier tells of harrowing experience at Taylor trial

By Adolphus Williams in The Hague

The trial of the former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor resumed at The Hague on Monday after a three-day Dutch holiday break, with the prosecution putting a former child soldier in the witness stand.
The new prosecution witness, known only as TF1-143, is taking questions from the prosecution and testifying to alleged cruel treatments of civilians by rebel soldiers blamed on Mr Taylor.
The witness alleged that AFRC/RUF rebels used razor blades to mark some 50 boys and girls from among 150 abducted in Koinadugu District.
The former child combatant, now aged 22 years, said children were later assigned to various rebel commanders.
“When they started to mark us, the first person that they marked among us, they carved on his forehead ‘AFRC’ and on his chest ‘RUF’,” he said.
Under cross-examination, he said he was marked himself. He also narrated how he took orders from a rebel commander known as Kabila who had instructed him to rape an old lady, which he refused and for which he was punished.
He continued: “We met an old woman there, so Kabila ordered me to rape [her] and I started crying...Because the old woman could - was able to give birth to my own mother... At that time I had not even started sex. At that time I didn't even have a girlfriend... So he punished me. He asked me to lie down under the sun and open my eyes for the rest of the day... He took me into a bush and he defecated and asked me to eat it up, because he said I had started disobeying his orders. He said I would never have peace in my life. He said if I did not do that he would kill me and leave me there and if anybody asked him he would tell that person that I had run away.”
He said at this point he complied.
The witness said he was given tablets to strengthen his courage to using a machete to cut off limbs and kill civilians.
The cross-examination continues.

Courtesy of BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground.

[This article was also carried by Awoko and the Concord Times]
ICRC moot court competition ends today at Special Court

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and humanitarian principles and the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) will host this year’s National IHL Moot in Sierra Leone.

This is the first time ever that the National Red Cross Society is organising the competition and the series mark the fourth inter-collegiate contest on IHL in Sierra Leone.

The IHL Moot Court competition is a training event on IHL intended for students and aimed 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 defence 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 students acquiring knowledge of this body of law while in the same time appreciating its practical relevance.

Altogether six teams, comprising three students from Njala University, Milton Margai College of Education & Technology, Fourah Bay College, International Institute of Islamic Studies and the Northern and Eastern Polytechnics, have been pre-selected to participate in the competition.

The students will be judged on their knowledge of IHL and public international law, their capacity to use the instruments of law to argue a study case, their teamwork and the quality of their oral expression. Whilst 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.

Those who will emerge as winners 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 (ICRC) initiated the national IHL moot court competition for university colleges in 2005 in Sierra Leone, within the framework 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.
In the war crimes trial of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, there are some Prosecution witnesses who request not to be seen by the public while they testify.

Lawyers pressing charges against Taylor say these witnesses fear for their safety and that of their family members and would not like to be known while they give evidence.

At some point, lawyers defending Charles Taylor reject the protective status of some of these witnesses and asked the Court to look at the reasons for keeping them away from the public eye.

So when the Prosecution put another secret witness on the stand Tuesday, Taylor’s lawyers resisted that TF1-215 did not meet the criteria to be hidden from the public.

As Alphonsus Zeon reports, the ensuing argument between the opposing lawyers took almost the entire Tuesday after the previous witness, TF1-143, had left the stand.

ZEON: Anyah says the witness should not be given a fake name like TF1-215; he should not give testimony behind the camera, and that his voice should not be distorted, because he is not a child, a victim of sexual violence, neither an insider, nor an expert witness.

Anyah said these categories of witnesses are the ones covered by protective measures and that TF1-215 did not fit in any of these categories.

ANYAH: Indeed I submit to the Chamber that witness 215 who is up next is not covered by this order.

ZEON: Taylor’s lawyer Anyah prevails on the Judges to review the reasons for granting protective status to some witnesses, because the British-trained Ghanaian lawyer argues times have changed so much so that some of the ten-year old measures do not hold water any longer.

The Prosecution counter-argues that although TF1-215 is a witness of fact, he does hold security fear.

Prosecution lawyer Julia Baly says the court in its decision of January this year said it was satisfied that potential threats to witnesses still existed, providing the basis why the measure should stay.

The Court agrees with Taylor’s lawyers that TF1-215 did not enjoy protection, but Presiding Judge Theresa Doherty says the call for a review of the protective measures remains arguable.

JUSTICE DOHERTY: The Defence have opposed and applied to rescind the purported protective measures for witness TF1-215. The Prosecution submit that the witness is protected by an order of Trial Chamber I of 5 July 2004, entitled "Decision on Prosecution motion for modification of protective measures for witnesses", which the Prosecution submits applies to 266 witnesses of fact including witness TF1-215. After careful consideration of that decision and the submissions of counsel, we find nothing in the decision which would entitle witness TF1-215 to any protective measures. In our view, the decision relates solely to those witnesses listed in annexes A and B of the renewed Prosecution motion for protective measures. Witness TF1-215 is not among those witnesses listed in the annexes. Accordingly, the witness will testify in open court.
ZEON: Instead of bringing TF1-215 in open court, the Prosecution withdraws the witness they say should have testified to facts.

Prosecution lawyer Shyamala Alagendra announces a different witness instead.

BALY: Your Honour, the Prosecution does not intend to call witness TF1-215. The next witness will be witness TF1-028, to be led by my colleague Ms Alagendra.

ALAGENDRA: This witness, your Honour, is a group 1, category A witness, and the protective measures afforded to this witness previously were for her to testify using a pseudonym, behind a screen and with voice distortion, your Honour.

ZEON: By the time the new witness, TF1-028, got ready to set foot in the courtroom it was time to pack up for the day’s proceedings.

This is Alphonsus Zeon for the BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground, reporting from The Hague.
The trial of former President Charles Taylor has resumed following a short break, with a former child soldier, now 22, testifying that he and others were drugged to commit horrendous atrocities, including hacking women to death.

Meanwhile, the court’s press office issued a list of witnesses scheduled to be called by the Prosecution over the next 2 weeks, as well as Prosecution witness summaries identifying evidence that each witness may provide. The list consists of 3 crime-basewitnesses (including a former child soldier) and 3 linkage or "insider" witnesses.

The ex-child soldier, known screen name, TPLF-143.

Excerpts of Prosecutor Mohammed Bangura’s questioning former child soldier, TPLF-143:

Pros: Do you know what group captured you and the other boys and girls in Koinadugu zone?
Wit: Yes. Both AFRC and RUF because they would mark us with their names.

Pros: You said that Kabila came from the meeting and that your group had been ordered to be the advanced team to leave for Freetown, were you ordered to go to the pro (ppl) bush before that?
Wit: Kabila said that our group
Child Soldier Dwells Into Atrocities

My boss told me we were in Kamalu town.

Was it Kamalu? Was it Kamala?

Was it Kukura after Kamalu?

Was there any fighting there?

Was there any fighting after you took the two big pigs?

I told them to loot and kill the people in the village and we went to a house with 5 people including two men, a woman and two children.

Kabila demonstrated to us how to do it and hacked the first man on his neck. Then I hacked the woman next to him and hacked her on her chest and hacked her on her side and I hacked the child with her.

Can you slowly take us through how you killed those people?

I hacked the woman on the back of her neck and then on her breast with a machete. I hacked the child on his neck and one side. One of them begged me not to do it but Kabila told me to do it and I would kill him, so I hacked him as well and cut off his head.

After that incident did anything else happen in that village?

Some of the fighters on the orders of the local leaders down houses. Then, we left.

Can you tell us the name of the village?

That was my first time going to that village and I did not know that village. It was three villages from Kamala town.

When did you go next?
WHEN former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo declared that sub-Saharan Africa has lost USD140bn via theft since independence, he was probably speaking with a definite time span. Now, lawyers chasing the fortunes of former President Charles Taylor have found evidence that he amassed USD5bn in two accounts at the American bank, City Bank.

It is unlikely that anyone has estimated how much leaders that preceded Mr Taylor, dating from WVS Tubman, William R. Tolbert and Samuel K. Doe, stacked away in foreign banks, since there has been no international interest in their fortunes like Mr Taylor’s, because of his trial on war crimes and claims he is too poor to cover his legal expenses.

But the new USD5bn revelation shows that Mr Taylor, who ruled from 1990 to 1997 (although he began wealth accumulation far earlier when he launched the war in 1990), is three times wealthier than late Nigeria’s Sani Abacha, who ruled from 1993 to 1998.
Agents Of Poverty

Almost the same time span, Abacha amassed US$2bn within 5 years, while Taylor amassed US$5bn within the same time, according to reports.
Moreover, Nigeria is Africa's leading oil producer, boasting huge wealth compared to Liberia, ranked 1st in war that is dirtier.

Nigeria's GDP stands at 167,939, ranking 32 on the global scale. Liberia's GDP stands at 1,381, ranking 154.

1998 - and said an inquiry proved it had criminal origins.
An agreement was worked out under which Nigeria's government promised to invest the returned money in the country.
The funds will be spent on development projects, such as hospitals, schools and roads.

Although the ruling, by Switzerland's highest court, opens the way for the bulk of the cash to be returned to come under pressure to disclose, and freeze, whatever part of the vast sums he is believed to have looted from Zaire that he may have deposited outside the country.

They have decided not to do so.
It is widely assumed, here and abroad, that some or much of President Mobutu's fortune has been deposited in Swiss banks, but unless the Government acts to block the assets, nobody can say how much. While estimations of the Zairian leader's fortune range well into the billions of dollars, some officials say only a small part of it may ultimately be traceable to bank accounts to which he can be linked.

In an interview with the Swiss national radio, Finance Minister Kaspar Villiger added that the country had been informed of an international law on the subject.
Nevertheless, if the government council acted to freeze the assets, the banks would then be legally obliged to report to the country's banking commission which accounts are in Mr. Mobutu's name, and how much money is in them. Swiss banking law has been changed in recent years to require that banks know who their depositors are, rather than allowing them to deposit money in anonymous accounts.

But does not guarantee full disclosure, however. Dictators, drug dealers and tax evaders can and do use false names or send relatives as friends to do their banking.

In the case of the late Zaire dictator Mobutu, hence, there are no firm figures of his accounts in Swiss banks, but his country sought to retrieve at least US $3.3bn of the vast amounts.

From his presidential victory with the slogan that since "he spoilt it he will fix it," Mr. Taylor presented his bill to donors and the international community, declaring he needed US$3bn from them to fix it.
But with the country's much-talked about debt standing at US$3bn, Mr. Taylor would have paid it off and be left with at least US $3bn, and still US$500m poorer than Abacha.

In Nigeria's case, Switzerland returned $686m invested in its banks with a clear proviso on what the money should be used for—development.

The BBC reported that the Abacha family failed in a last-ditch court appeal to prevent the money being handed back to Nigeria.
Switzerland agreed last August to hand over the money—frozen since Abacha died in 1998—which has been frozen since Abacha died in 1998.
As Special Court “Pays” Witnesses To Testify:

NO MONEY TO TRY TAYLOR

Donors To Give US$23m; Court Needs US$68m
forms for their children, which has happened in some cases, is not. Some people have approached us offering to give evidence for the defense if we will pay them more than they are being offered by the prosecution. Frankly, this corrodes the whole system of justice that the international tribunals are supposed to be upholding. The defense also complains that press conferences given by the prosecution in West Africa, while the trial has been in progress, have made it more difficult to find those prepared to testify for Taylor. "When the chief prosecutor stands up in Monrovia," Munyard says, "and makes extravagant claims about Taylor and the millions of dollars he has supposedly squandered away, it clearly has an inhibiting effect on potential defense witnesses. They fear that they will be put on some UN war crimes list if they come forward, want." The Special Court for Sierra Leone is not the first international tribunal to be the focus of such criticism, nor the first where some observers detect a legal culture clash between US and UK precedence. Taylor's defense team comes mainly from the English Bar. The two key figures in the office of the prosecutor are American, Stephen Rapp, from Iowa, and the chief prosecutor. "In the jurisdiction I come from, witness payments can be made by a US marshal where appropriate. But listen, we are talking about reimbursement of expenses here. Nobody is being enriched through testify..." "In cases where we have had to relocate a witness because of fear of reprisals, it's right that we should take care of things such as school fees if their children can no longer go to the local mission school. The principle is that nobody should be worse off as a result of testifying." "The monetary issue of greatest concern to the Special Court is the continual struggle to make the contributions to keep it alive and functioning. Unlike the ad hoc tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the Sierra Leone court relies on voluntary payments from states minor than assessed contributions from the UN. Four states have borne the brunt: the US, Canada, Sweden, and the Netherlands. "Other contributions have been modest," Herman von Heuser, the registrar, admits. "I spend about a third of my
A witness told commissioners of Liberia’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that the late Sierra Leonean rebel leader Corporal Foday Sankor was based in Tubmanburg, Bomi County, in 1998 before launching an incursion in neighboring St. Louis.

Testifying Wednesday at the ongoing public hearings of the TRC in Tubmanburg, Bomi County, a resident of Tubmanburg, Mustapha Nyei, 60, said former president Charles Taylor then led the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) visited Sankor at his base in Tubmanburg in 1998. He said before fighters of Sankor's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) attacked the Deh Valley,从而 to launch their incursions into Sierra Leone, Sierra Leoneans and Liberian fighters were transported from Robertsport City, Grand Cape Mount County, to Tubmanburg in an invasion by Corporal Sankor.

Foday Sankor was accused by the TRC of atrocities committed during the civil war.

Foday Sankor was based in Tubmanburg.

Witness Mustapha Nyei

TRC Accuses Executive

Foday

Nyoi explained that the RUF fighters were based in the area where the killings occurred. Nyoi suspected that the RUF was in talks with the Liberian government. He said the RUF was trying to negotiate with the government. The TRC is an independent body set up to investigate the war crimes committed during the civil war. The RUF was accused of atrocities committed during the conflict. Nyoi said the RUF was recruiting and training fighters in the area.

Following the briefing, See pg 10
The Informer (Liberia)
Friday, 2 May 2008

Over US$5bn. Discovered in Charles Taylor's Accounts

By Jerome Toe

The Chief prosecutor of the UN Criminal Court for Sierra Leone based in The Hague says more than five billion U.S. dollars have been uncovered in two separate accounts belonging to the United States of America.

Addressing a news conference Thursday in Monrovia, Mr. Stephen Rapp said the UN court has made progress in tracing the accounts of Taylor who is now standing trial in The Hague on charges of crimes against humanity.

Mr. Rapp said the court had discovered more than US$5bn in two separate accounts in Citibank and another US$375 million in an unnamed bank.

The court traced transactions conducted by Mr. Taylor and his co-conspirators during his regime, both in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and was able to discover these accounts, said the Prosecutor. The court has documents that Mr. Taylor has nine bags of diamonds valued at US$12, he added.

Mr. Rapp said the witnesses from the two accounts in the time of US$5bn have been frozen by the Special Court for Sierra Leone based in The Hague.

The Chief Prosecutor also clarified that there has been no involvement of witnesses to testify against the former Liberian President. The court provides allowances to facilitate the mobilization of witnesses to The Hague from their country of residence, he added.

He said the fund (allowance) is used to meet the daily needs of witnesses while awaiting the term at the court to give testimonies against Taylor. Rapp contended that the allowances are not meant to enrich any of the witnesses as being speculated in many quarters.

Firestone Scholarship Recipient Receives Academic Honor

Student Emmanuel Kolleh, a scholarship recipient of Firestone Liberia attending the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) in Kakata, Margibi County, was among several students of the institution that were honored by the Administration of the school for their high academic performance during the first semester of academic year 2007-2008.

The administrative office of the school at a ceremony held on Friday, April 25, 2008, in the auditorium of the school.

Speaking shortly following the
The Chief Prosecutor of the Sierra Leonean Special Court trying former President Charles Taylor for crimes allegedly committed in Sierra Leone, Steven Rapp, Thursday disclosed that the court has record that Mr. Taylor has two separate accounts at Citibank in New York, United States of America.

Mr. Rapp told a news conference that the two accounts which bear Taylor’s name, have a total of US$5 billion with transitions.

He indicated that most of the US$5 billion transitions were movement of money between the two accounts to maximize daily interest.

Mr. Rapp noted that the court has also identified that US$375 million went out of the two accounts into accounts in different banking institutions.

He said the special court was making effort to trace the banks where the US$375 million and other money deposited by Mr. Taylor when he was President of Liberia.

Mr. Rapp disclosed that the court has obtained records from banking institutions throughout the world including banks in America, most of which, according to him, are cooperating.

“We have the capacity and assistance of all the countries in the world to trace Taylor’s accounts. Although people might withdraw in cash, they may not be able to withdraw US$375 million in cash. So if you are talking about those kinds of funds you do not have the capacity to withdraw large sum in cash,” Mr. Rapp said in response to a question.

The Chief Prosecutor was hopeful that there are records that will allow the tracing of the US$375 million.

Mr. Rapp said 5,000 Sierra Leoneans victimized by Taylor’s terror were yet to undergo medical treatment and that Taylor’s asset would be used for reparation program.

He noted that proceeds from the diamond sale were used to boost Taylor’s war machinery in Sierra Leone.

It can be recalled that in 2002, Mr. Taylor denied depositing money in foreign banks and challenged the international community to seize any in his name.
"BLAH NOT FORCE TO TESTIFY"

By Alloyscious David

The Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone Steven Rapp says former President Moses Blah is not forced to testify at the ongoing trial of ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague.

He told a news conference Thursday that the court was concerned about Mr. Blah's health and could not force him to show up in The Hague.

He indicated that the court was not interested in forcing Mr. Blah to appear.

Coca-Cola Earmarks Expanded Production

The Coca-Cola Company has earmarked program for the expansion of its production in Liberia.

BLAH NOT

In a recent interview, a spokesman of Mr. Blah told this paper that the former president's testimony to the special court would depend on a clean medical certificate authorizing him to go.

Mr. Blah said he was suffering from heart problem and other illnesses.

Former President Moses Blah before it, but he was selected based on a seven-page document he (Blah) provided investigators and prosecutors of the special court relevant to Taylor's trial.

Mr. Rapp indicated that Blah, in the statement, volunteered to testify and even agreed that the special Court subpoenaed him.

He noted that the subpoena was meaningless and that Blah has agreed to be a witness of truth.

The Special Court Chief Prosecutor disclosed that Blah is a protective witness who decided to go public two weeks ago.

Rapp also disclosed that Blah has agreed to travel to The Hague sometime this month or June.
Gov’t Must Claim Taylor’s ‘Ill-gotten Wealth’

The Chief Prosecutor of the Sierra Leonean Special Court trying former President Charles Taylor in The Hague for crimes allegedly committed in Sierra Leone, Steven Rapp has disclosed that the court has records that former President Charles Taylor has two separate accounts totaling five billion United States dollars at Citibank in New York, United States of America.

Mr. Rapp told a news conference on Thursday that the court has also identified that US$375 million went out of the two accounts into accounts in other banking institutions.

He indicated that the special court was also making efforts to trace banks in which the US$375 million were deposited when Mr. Taylor was President of Liberia.

But what is of additional interest in the discovery of Taylor’s accounts of US$5 billion transactions is that, the Chief Prosecutor is claiming that 5,000 Sierra Leoneans were victimized by Taylor’s terror and as such Taylor’s asset would be used for reparation programs for the victims in Sierra Leone.

Moreover, Mr. Rapp said most of the money in Taylor’s accounts are for Sierra Leoneans based on information that Mr. Taylor got several pieces of diamonds from Sierra Leone.

As much as we sympathize with our brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone for the unfortunate civil war there, we would like to point out that bulk of Taylor’s ill-gotten assets are clearly traceable from Liberia.

It is undisputable that for most part of the 1990s (from 1990 – 1997) Taylor as leader of the largest rebel faction controlled within the neighborhood of 90 percent of Liberia’s territory in which he looted significant portion of the country’s mineral wealth.

And when he was elected president in 1997, through an internationally brokered special arrangement to end Liberia’s civil war, Taylor continued his plunder of the country’s mineral resources for the next six years for his personal benefit.

Bulk of Taylor’s excess assets was therefore amassed through the plundering of Liberia’s mineral resources for a total of around 14 years.

In view of this, the current Liberian government must take note of the claims by the chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The claims by Mr. Rapp that most of the money in Taylor’s accounts are for Sierra Leoneans based on information that Mr. Taylor got “several pieces” of diamonds from Sierra Leone presupposes that Liberia may not have claims to bulk of Taylor’s ill-gotten assets thereby causing concern among Liberians.

If the Liberian government remains quiet on this matter, we are afraid that bulk of Taylor’s stolen assets from Liberia would not be returned.

The government needs to firstly verify as to whether Taylor’s accounts have been discovered and if this is true, then Liberia should begin to press for the return of those stolen assets to help with the reconstruction of the country devastated by a prolonged civil strife.
with very large accounts," Mr. Rapp said at a new conference here Thursday.  
"But what we have identified is at least $75m from those two accounts which went out of those accounts and that's the amount, the kind of assets we are tracking, and we will keep tracking. And of course, we are talking about accounts that were back when he was president," Rapp stated.

The Sierra Leone Special Court Prosecutor said the two accounts Mr. Taylor operated at the City Bank in New York were opened when he became President and the US$75m could have travelled to many places by now.

"So, we are talking about money that could have travelled to many places in 2003 and during that time we didn't have the capacity to have the assistance of all countries in the world to trace that to banking institutions. And of course, people make withdrawals in cash, (but) you will not be able to do that because we are talking about those kind of sum that you don't have the capacity to withdraw large some in cash. So, we will have records that will allow the tracing of these assets and finding eventually their destinations provided they haven't over spent, we don't think that is possible or likely," Rapp added.

He said Mr. Taylor's accounts at the City Bank have since been closed and that the money had been moving from one country to another. He said the amounts in question are money accrued from sales of Liberian timber that could have gone towards the development of roads and the building of other infrastructure and schools.

"Our goal was to get those money for the victims of pillage in Sierra Leone, but what we have seen is that substantial amount of those were from Liberia through timber sales which could have been used for roads, schools and others but they actually went into Taylor's account," he said in an exclusive interview after the press conference.
Defense lawyers for former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor on trial for war crimes, have contended that Liberians who fought in Sierra Leone were not under the control of Charles Taylor and that the January 6, 1999 invasion of Freetown was carried out by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

Defense lawyers argued that the invasion was carried out by the AFRC with no senior participation by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of the late Corporal Foday Sankor.

In seeking to diminish State witness Allmann Bobson Sesay's credibility, Defense Counsel Anyah highlighted the witness's participation in atrocities.

Through a review of payments made by the Special Court to the witness, Anyah also implied that Sesay had a financial motive to testify against Taylor.

During re-examination of Sesay, Prosecutor Alegendra focused on links between Taylor and the RUF, and the involvement of senior RUF leadership in the Freetown invasion.

Anyah began the day by asking Sesay
about Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone. He showed the witness prosecution
notes from a previous statement in which
Sesay had told prosecutors that of the
Liberians sent to reinforce AFRC/RUF
forces in 1998 and 1999, he only knew of
Special Task Force (STF) members. (Acc-
ting to previous testimony, STF mem-
bers had part of their roots in the army of
former Liberian President Samuel Doe
and the anti-Taylor rebel movement,
ULIMO. Sesay explained that when they
first came, he and others had assumed
they were all STF, until the commander
who brought them, "053", introduced a
number of them as being former fighters
of Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of
Liberia (NPFL). Anyah pointed to evi-
dence from a previous witness, Perry
Kamara, that the Liberians in the Red
Lion Battalion were former bodyguards
of Liberian RUF commander Dennis
Mingo ("Superman"). Sesay said he
didn’t know about that and didn’t dis-
pute it, but stood by his contention that
Commander 05 introduced some of the
Liberians as being former NPFL fight-
ers.
Sesay repeated his testimony that a com-
mander named "KBC", a member of the
Sierra Leone Army (SLA - a term often
used interchangeably with AFRC after
May 1997) who had fled to Guinea with
a group of SLA members in 1998, had
collectively sought refuge in Liberia from
Invasion force that took Freetown in Janauary

Salaya described roles of various com-
manders in the Freetown invasion, de-
spite their absence. He described how Sa-
mbie Bockarie gave Guliit the order to burn Freetown; that there was constant communication with Issa Sesay, who eventually arrived with reinforcements; and that he had frequent com-
uncation with the invasion force. A memo-
rial service was held in the knowledge of any role played by Morris Kallon.

Meanwhile the trial chamber will ob-
serve a two-day break. 

May 4, 2008

UNMIL Pledges

165 military observers (MILOs) and Staff Officers of various nationalities serv-
ing in the UN Mission in Liberia, (UNMIL).

Ambassador Lai said that even though UNMIL has embarked on the first phase of its drawdown plan, the Mission will maintain its support and assistance to the Government and people of Liberia, so that further progress can be achieved in the areas of Security, Re-
turn, Rule of Law, Governance, Economic Development, and the effective implementation of the newly-
completed Poverty Reduction Strategy, PPS.

Explaining the important role that the military observer contingent is playing in the Mission, Ambassador Lai stated, "Our military observers are the principal advisors to the Force Commander and are deployed throughout the Mission to ensure that the rule of law is respected and that the rights of all are protect-
ed.

They are also tasked with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in their respective areas of responsibility, and they have been doing an excellent job.

In conclusion, the Mission is committed to maintaining a strong and effective military observer contingent to help maintain law and order and to support the Government of Liberia in its efforts to build a stable and prosperous future for the country.

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT

THE LATE

Jeffrey Jingo Banchi

Date of Birth: 1937
Date of Death: 2008

Let us pray for his soul and the soul of all the departed.
Leone, Sierra Leonean and Liberian fighters were transported from Robertsport City, Grand Cape Mount County to Tubmanburg to be briefed by Corporal Sankoh.

A TRC release quoted Mr Nyei as saying following the briefing, the fighters boarded three pickup trucks for the Sierra Leonean border at Bo Waterside where they launched an invasion. “Foday Sankoh was based here in Tubmanburg. That was no secret around here. When Taylor came here he stayed here with Sankoh for nine days and everyone saw them here,” the witness explained.

He said RUF fighters based in Robertsport and Tubmanburg Cities were under the command of General Oliver Varney and other commanders he only named as: “One Man One,” “CO Korto,” and one Dixon Wollo.

Mr. Nyei said at regular intervals Sankoh left his Tubmanburg base to visit his RUF fighters in areas occupied by the group in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor is standing trial in The Hague for crimes against humanity allegedly committed in neighboring Sierra Leone where Sankoh was a rebel leader. Corporal Sankoh himself died in prison while standing trial for war crimes at the United Nations backed War Crimes Court in Freetown.
What Are Taylor’s Crimes?

Special Court Reveals, 50 Journalists End Int’l Training

Charles McArthur Ghankay Taylor is presently in The Hague before His Honor, Justice Julia Sebutinde charged and prosecuted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. But what are the specifics for which Taylor is being judged? The NEW VISION looks inside the dock of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and pieces together the specificity of Taylor’s crimes.

Referred to as Charles Ghankay Taylor otherwise known as Darkpankhill Charles Ghankay Taylor or Darkpankhill Charles McArthur Taylor, Mr. Taylor was with crimes against humanity, violations of Article 3 Common to Geneva Conventions and of additional protocols I and II and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, in violation of Articles 2, 3, and 4.

According to the second amended indictment issued against Mr. Taylor, the accused “by his acts or omissions in relation to events described below pursuant to Article 6.1 and or alternatively Article 6.3 of the Statute (of the Special Court for Sierra Leone) is individually criminally responsible for terrorism to the civilian population.”

Cont’d on page 6
What Are Taylor's

alibis? by Glenda Kim

Taylor was also charged with physical violence under which the indictment claims that he also committed acts of sexual violence against civilian women and girls in Kono, Kailahun, Freetown and West Area amongst other allegations of physical violence, child soldier abduction and force labor, looting and individual criminal responsibility.

Meanwhile, 50 Liberian and Sierra Leonean journalists have ended three-day training on the reporting of the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. The international training which runs from the 26-27 of April was organized by the Advocates for International Development in partnership with the International Center for Media Studies Development in West Africa (ICEMDAWA).

Serving as keynote speaker at the opening ceremony Information Minister Dr. Laurence Bropah said the training has a widespread implication.

He stated that it is not the job of the journalists' job to Opinion stories while discharging their reporting duties. Rather he said it is the responsibility of the journalists to report the facts. Dr. Bropah urged the journalists in the Country to leave their opinion out of a story they publish or air.

The Information Minister admonished the journalists to be analytical and yet not to be opinionated, saying that Liberian journalists are to lead the lives they change to produce their best overall result, to command higher salary and to live up to the high standards among others, which values he noted could be achieved if the professionals are by effective capacity enhancement.

He said during the formation of the poverty reduction strategy, the Ministry of Information underscored the need for media actors to be strengthened and developed.

For her part, the Executive Director of the Advocate International Aid, Affia Hirsch, spoke of reports that Liberians do not have access to the trial of former President Charles Taylor.

Madam Hirsch stated that senior journalists and editors in Liberia and Sierra Leone have a crucial role in imparting information about the trial of the Liberian former President and also Sierra Leonians.

She added that the training was intended to assist journalists in the both countries to present an objective and balanced picture of the trial by the Special Court for Sierra Leone through their reportage.

Also speaking was the Executive Director of the International Center for Media Studies Development in West Africa Josephus Gray, who said the process was about training journalists for the coverage of Special Court trying former President Charles Taylor.

Mr. Gray admonished the participants to go back and share the knowledge they have acquired with their reporting colleagues to ever build their skills not only for the Special Courts of Mr. Taylor but also for their career advancement.

He said out of the 50 journalists who attended the international training thirty five were from Liberia while fifteen came from Sierra Leone. The
OPINION

Journalism Training On Charles Taylor Trial Is laudable

OVER FIFTY West African journalists from Liberia and Sierra Leone last week gathered in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, to gain insights into criminal proceedings in general, particularly the War Crimes trial in The Hague of ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor.

THE TRAINING BROUGHT together a panel of distinguished journalism trainers and lawyers with wealth of experience in criminal trials. The program was organized by the United Kingdom Advocates for International Development (A4ID), in collaboration with the West Africa media rights group, International Centre for Media Studies and Development (INCEMSADWA) with funding from the Open Society Initiative of the Soros Foundation Network Media Program based in the UK.

SINCE THE ARREST and prosecution of Mr. Taylor on charges of War Crimes allegedly committed in neighboring Sierra Leone, there has been a substantial expansion in public and media attention to such criminal proceedings. The peoples of both Liberia and Sierra Leone, mainly war victims are anxious to know the outcome of a trial that has drawn so much international media attention.

THE ATTEMPTS TO offer justice to victims of war crimes are one of the bright spots of our age. Most journalists — who are the people most likely to witness war crimes, other than the perpetrators and their victims are under increasing pressure from the public for information and analyses regarding the administration of justice in the ongoing trial.

WE BELIEVE THAT one of the primary goals of a criminal trial is to ensure an accurate determination of the facts in a criminal case. Journalists from the two countries are under social and professional obligations to justify the confidence reposed in them by the organizers of the three days international media training program to objectively, balance and fairly report on the trial in The Hague.

WE APPLAUD THE organizers- Advocates for International Development (A4ID) and the West Africa media rights group, International Centre for Media Studies and Development (INCEMSADWA) for realizing the importance of media reporting in informing the public on such criminal proceedings that allows public scrutiny of the trial.

WE THINK THAT the training was an eye opener and will put journalists from both countries in the position to remove their biases and personal feelings from the case and better help the public make informed decision regarding the trial of Mr. Taylor.

THE PARTICIPANTS WILL be held personal responsible if they fail to justify the confidence reposed in them by sharing their experiences, expertise and knowledge with their colleagues in the newsrooms and adequately inform the public in both Liberia and Sierra Leone on the Taylor trial by reporting unbiased.

WE SAY THANK you A4ID, Thank You INCEMSADWA and also thanks a million to Open Society Initiative of the Soros Foundation Network Media Program based in the UK for supporting the training exercise.
Yeaten Smashed Babies Heads

A survivor of the Mabil River Massacre in Bomi County said Charles Taylor's government militiamen under the command of General Benjamin Yeaten smashed the heads of scores of babies and disembowel pregnant women during the killings. Moses Bridge, 77, said the fighters mutilated the dead before dumping their bodies in the Mabil River.

He was testifying Monday before commissioners of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission during a public hearing in the auditorium of the C.H. Dowrey High School in Tubmanburg City, Bomi County. Mr. Bridge said those massacred were transported from Tubmanburg City under the pretense of evacuating them to Monrovia for relief supplies and safety.

He said three truck loads of civilians were transported one after another to the Mabil Bridge where Yeaten and his men were awaiting them. "After the empty truck returned to tubmanburg after carrying the first batch of people I saw blood stains all over the vehicle and suspected that our people had been killed by General Yeaten and his men.

Following the return of the truck, Bridge explained dozens of others including his and his wife boarded the truck headed again for the Mabil.

At the Mabil River Bridge, the witness explained, the fighter responsible to carry out the daughter first singled out his wife to disembark from the truck.

Drawing the emotion of the audience, he said his wife bid him farewell saying, "I know I am going to die so goodbye. Remember we promised each other that only death will do us apart."

Mr. Bridge explained that after saying those words, the fighter carrying out the killings shot his wife in the presence before mutilating her body.

He said the fighter then asked him, "you see what happened to that woman," and he responded in tears: "that is my wife you have just killed." Following the verbal exchanges with the fighter, Bridge said he requested that he wanted to say his last prayer, but the fighter responded: "we are not here for God business."

He said he was then asked to sit on the rails of the bridge and was pushed by another fighter into the river accompanied by balls of gunfire. He said he successfully evaded.

Read on page 6
Yeaten Smashed

The TRC is an independent body set up to investigate the root causes of the Liberian crisis, document human rights violations, review the history of Liberia, and put all human rights abuses that occurred during the period from 1979 to 2003 on record. The TRC mandate is to also identify victims and perpetrators and make recommendations on amnesty, prosecution, and reparation.

The ongoing rural public hearing in Bomli County is being held under the theme: “Confronting Our Difficult Past, For A Better Future.”

Cities were under the command of General Oliver Varney and other commanders he only named as: “One Man One,” “CO Korto,” and one Dixon Wollo.

Mr. Nyell said at regular intervals Sankoh left his Tubmanburg base to visit his RUF fighters in areas occupied by the group in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor is standing trial in The Hague for crimes against humanity allegedly committed in neighboring Sierra Leone where Sankoh was a rebel leader.

Corporal Sankoh himself died in prison while standing trial for war crimes at the United Nations backed War Crimes Court in Freetown.

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The ongoing rural public hearing in Bomli County is being held under the theme: “Confronting Our Difficult Past, For A Better Future.”
HRW wants perpetrators to account for war crimes

See Story on Page 6
Wednesday, May 1, 2008

called on community and government leaders, as well as traditional chiefs, elders and prominent Liberians to take the lead in combating the scourge of rape and other acts of sexual and gender-based violence.

Commenting on the situation in neighboring Ivory Coast, HRW recalled that the Security Council has unequivocally rejected impunity for serious crimes like those committed in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

The group recalled the Secretary-General's remarks to the "Sixth Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, peace and justice, do indeed go hand in hand."

"As such, Human Rights Watch hopes you will maximize the opportunity presented by your meetings next week to not only discuss the role justice plays in consolidating the fragile peace and stability in both countries, but also to take meaningful and concrete steps to ensure that this commitment to victims of horrific atrocities and to the consolidation of peace moves from rhetoric to action," the letter concluded.

**Strike action**

But to our utmost surprise, only supervisors were given loan leaving the tappers out entirely. He continued that the buying rate for a ton of rubber is US$45 and was reduced last year to 18 dollars without prior notice.

The spokesman further said that another issue was the provision of two bags of rice each for the tappers, but that is yet to materialize. He frowned on a new policy introduced by management that has drastically reduced the number of their dependents attending school, noting that the first policy introduced allowed most of their kids to attend but with the introduction of the new policy, only few kids are in school while the rest are paying school and medical fees.

He also spoke of the dire need for safety gears for tappers working at the plantation.

He added that there are attempts by the management to meet some of their demands, but the main one which is according to him, the most important one, is yet to be resolved.

"We have not yet received our loans. The
Babies' Heads Smashed, Pregnant Women Disemboweled

Witness Bridge at Bomi TRC Hearings

A survivor of the Mahel River Massacre in Bomi County said that Charles Taylor's government militia under the command of General Benjamin Yeaten smashed the heads of scores of babies and disemboweled pregnant women during shelling. Moses Bridge, 77, said the fighters mutilated the dead before dumping their bodies in the Mahel River.

He was testifying Monday before commissioners of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) at ongoing rural public hearings in the auditorium of the C.I.E. Dewey High School in Tubmanburg City, Bomi County.

Mr. Bridge said those massacred were transported from Tubmanburg City under the command of General Yeaten.

Babies'

the presence of evacuating them to Monrovia for relief supplies and safety.

He added that three truck loads of civilians were transported one after another to the Mahel Bridge where Yeaten and his men were awaiting them.

"After the empty truck returned to Tubmanburg after carrying the first batch of people, I saw blood stains all over the vehicle and suspected that our people had been killed by General Yeaten and his men."

Following the return of the truck, Bridge explained, dozens of others including himself and his wife boarded the truck headed again for the Mahel.

At the Mahel River Bridge, the witness explained, the fighter responsible to carry out the slaughter first singled out his wife to disembowel from the truck.

Drawing the emotion of the audience, Mr. Bridge said his wife bade him farewell saying, "I know I am going to die so goodbye," and promised each other that only death will do us part.

Witness Bridge explained that after saying those words, the fighter carrying out the killings shot his wife in the head before mutilating her body.

He said the fighter then asked him: "You see what happened to that woman," and he said he responded: "I see what happened to that woman."
Newspaper Summary
President Sirleaf Returns Home Healthy - Speaks to Several Topical Issues
(The Inquirer, The News, The Analyst)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf yesterday returned home from the United States of America, after almost three weeks of absence from the country. The Liberian leader was heartily received back home by a cross section of her government officials, officials and members of the ruling Unity Party as well as Liberians from all walks of life.
- Shortly upon her arrival late yesterday evening, the President addressed the press on a wide range of national issues, ranging from issues of armed robbery; increment in the price of petroleum; the last Friday's judgment of the Criminal Court “A,” acquitting retried General Charles Julu and Col. Andrew Dorbor among several others.
- On the issue of an increase in the pump price of petroleum products and other basic commodities on the market, the President said the issue was a global matter but however, a national solution needed to be found in addressing it.
- She said while away, she was in constant contact with the relevant government agencies and functionaries that are responsible in addressing price issues on the market, stressing that she was in control of the situation.
- President Sirleaf said some of these increment like for example, the issue concerning the petroleum products, were necessary to avoid shortage on the market.

IMF Opt for Refined Goals to Reduce Poverty in Liberia
(The Inquirer)

- [sic] Following a week-long visit to Liberia by a team of International Monetary Fund (IMF) experts, Fund Mission Chief, Robert Powell, has argued that to help reach the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) goals, the authorities involved should refine the costing of PRS measures.
- He said donors should align their commitment with the PRS priorities at an early stage, saying, “The Fund supports the PRS through the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility.” Powell described his visit as successful. Speaking at a news conference over the weekend, Mr. Powell explained that the government and the mission have agreed on the importance of ensuring that the budget for fiscal 2008/09 be in line with PRS priorities.

Findings in Bribery Case due to be released today
(Heritage, The Inquirer, New Democrat)

- Following months of internal investigation into a bribery scandal involving five lawmakers findings into the bribery probe at the lower house are due to be released Tuesday to the plenary. Recommendations in the report would be debated by the full plenary to determine the fate of those involved in the alleged bribery.
- The Inquirer said unconfirmed reports emanating from the House Judiciary Committee suggest that the committee is expected to recommend some tough actions to be taken against some of the accused based on their respective roles played.
- Former Speaker Edwin Snowe last year accused five of his colleagues of bribe taking to remove him as speaker, a claim the men constantly denied.
Radio Summary

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

Rehabilitation of Monrovia-Buchanan Highway to be Delayed

- Star Radio has gathered that the rehabilitation of the Monrovia-Buchanan Highway will not start until 2010.
- Our sources attributed the inability of the project to start this year to several factors. One of the factors according to our sources, is the incoming rainy season.
- Another reason provided by our sources is inadequate raw materials needed for effective road-building. According to our sources, the huge rock deposit discovered near Barclay Farm in Margibi County has been sufficiently drained down and could run out of stock.
- The Monrovia-Buchanan road rehabilitation project is one of the major undertakings by the Chinese Road Construction team, CHICO. The project which covers Tubman Boulevard and Somalia Drive is financed by the World Bank.

Community leader suggests use of Ex-security Personnel to Fight Crime

- A local community leader says he would use the expertise of de-activated security personnel to fight criminal activities in his community. The Chairman of the Telecom Community in Paynesville said the inclusion and cooperation of the ex-officers would assist in making the community peaceful.
- He told Star Radio a peaceful community encourages investment and development. Mr. Fayiah said residents of the Telecom community have agreed to embark on a monthly clean up campaign to keep the community clean. He however, appealed to the municipal authorities of Paynesville and NGOs operating in the area to support the efforts.
- Mr. Fayiah also said owners of vacant lands would be encouraged to provide land for the construction of commercial latrines in the community. He assured the community members that proceeds from the latrine project would be used for community development. Mr. Fayiah spoke following his induction as head of the Telecom Community. Other officials inducted in office included James Fallah, Co-chairman and Jallah Saygbay, Secretary of the community.

AWOL Soldiers Begin Returning to Base - Says Defense Minister

- The Defense Ministry says some soldiers who fled the barracks have begun to return following weeks of absence. Defense Minister Brownie Samukai said the soldiers returned to their base at the Edward Beyan Kesselly Military Barracks on the Monrovia-Harbel Highway.
- Mr. Samukai however, did not state the exact number of soldiers who returned. The Defense Ministry last month announced that at least twenty soldiers of the restructuring army left the barracks without authorization.
- Mr. Samukai spoke to Star Radio following a closed-door hearing at the House of Representatives on the draft Defense Act. He called for the passage of the draft Act as it provides the legal basis of the Armed Forces of Liberia.
- Although the draft Defense Act has not been made public, it calls for measures to professionalize the armed forces.

Truth FM (News monitored today at 2:00 pm)

Lawmakers Passed Armed Robbery Bill

- The House of Representatives has passed the proposed legislation seeking to make armed robbery and other violent crimes non-bailable offenses. The bill was submitted to the lawmakers in an effort to curb the reported increase in armed robbery.
- At same time, some armed robbers have surrendered to the Police while a manhunt is on for more dangerous criminals.
- Police today arrested several criminals in the vicinity of the Freeport of Monrovia and forwarded more than 20 of them to court for prosecution.

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