

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



HIV/AIDS awareness wall mural in Bo

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, 27 August 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Concord Times
Tuesday, 26 August 2008

Taylor chained like a 'monkey'

Lead defence counsel said the Dutch security measure to put a chain round the waist of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, standing trial for war crimes in The Hague was particularly objectionable and obnoxious.

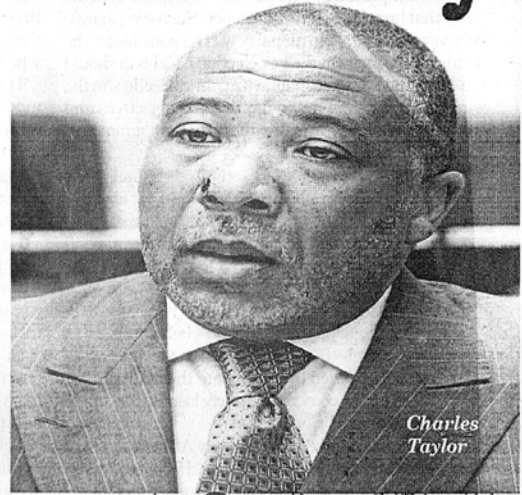
Courtney Griffiths argued in an interview with a BBC world service trust reporter at the

Special Court sitting in The Netherlands that: "you can imagine coming from an African background with our history of slavery. What it must feel like to a black person to be led with a chain around his waist."

He said his client considered the action as an affront to his humanity, adding that Taylor was willing to compromise on

the other provision because he understood the security reasons of such a measure.

"But so far as the chain around his waist is concerned, he fails to understand - and neither do we as his legal counsel - why that should be felt necessary when he's escorted to court by a number of fully-armed Dutch security officers."



However Griffiths said they

Taylor chained like a 'monkey'

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these matters with the Dutch authorities.

"And having been briefed by head of the court, their response was that there was no rational basis or justification for these

measures being imposed against Mr. Taylor. So I was merely repeating a conclusion to which these Judges, who obviously know a thing or two about security considerations, had already said."

BBC World Service Trust

Tuesday, 26 August 2008

QC COURTNEY GRIFFITHS-INTERVIEW-TUESDAY 26TH AUGUST 2008

Mr Charles Taylor surprisingly came to court on Tuesday morning after his lead counsel told the Court on Monday 25TH that his client would not subject himself to the two security measures.

On Monday, the Head of the sub-office of the Special Court sitting in The Hague, Mr. Gregory Townsend, presented a four-page report in which the Dutch authorities said they would not drop the two security measures.

BBC World Service Trust Mariama Khai Fornah caught up with QC Courtney Griffiths and first asked him what are the two security measures to which his client Mr. Taylor objects.

GRIFFITHS: Well, one of the measures involved a chain being put around Mr. Taylor's waist, and he finds that provision particularly objectionable and obnoxious because you can imagine coming from an African background with our history of slavery, what it must feel like to a black person to be led with a chain around your waist. And I can perfectly understand why he regards that as being an affront to his humanity.

Now the other provision, which I'm not allowed to discuss publicly, effectively is a method of sensory deprivation on the journey from the prison facilities to the Court. Mr. Taylor's willing to compromise on that, because he understands that for security reasons such a measure might be necessary. But so far as the chain around his waist is concerned, he fails to understand – and neither do we as his legal counsel – why that should be felt necessary when he's escorted to Court by a number of fully-armed Dutch security officers.

FORNAH: You are emphasising the chain around his waist, but when we spoke to the Head of the Sub-Office here at the Special Court, Greg Townsend, he said it is only a leather belt that is placed on Mr. Taylor. Why are you really emphasising on the chain around his waist?

GRIFFITHS: Well my information is that there is a chain involved. I have not been allowed sight of the particular contraption, but the fact of the matter is, everybody knows that Mr. Taylor likes to look good, so the thought that he'd be leaving prison without a belt to keep his trousers up is that – unimaginable. Why he needs another belt around his waist, God only knows.

FORNAH: What do you intend to do after Mr. Townsend has given his report to the Court that there is no way that these measures could be removed?

GRIFFITHS: Well, as advised by the Judges, who have already stated that they can find no justification or rational basis for the imposition of these provisions against Mr. Taylor, we intend to take up this issue with the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and provide written submissions in the hope that they will be able to resolve these matters with the Dutch authorities.

FORNAH: When the report was read out, you said there is no justification or rationale for your client, Mr. Taylor, to conform to what he said in Court. Why did you make such statement?

GRIFFITHS: Well I was merely quoting what the Judges had said on, I think it was Wednesday of last week, when having consulted with the head of the Court [sic.], Mr. Townsend, in private session without counsel from either side being present, they were given the intelligence upon which this change in security was based. And having been so briefed by Mr. Townsend, their response was that there was no rational basis or justification for these measures being imposed against Mr. Taylor. So I was merely repeating a conclusion to which these Judges, who obviously know a thing or two about security considerations, had already said.

FORNAH: You quoted Mr. Taylor that he will not be in Court, but it is surprising to note that Mr. Taylor is in Court. On what basis is Mr. Taylor in Court?

GRIFFITHS: Well, we have prevailed on Mr. Taylor that despite his objections to these obnoxious conditions to which he's being subjected, that we all have a vital interest in the trial continuing, and continuing smoothly and efficiently. Now you will recall that the particular witness who is currently giving evidence, that person's evidence had been adjourned since June. And so consequently we appreciate the logistical difficulties involved for the Office of the Prosecution [sic.] in transporting witnesses from West Africa to The Hague. We're anxious not to exacerbate those problems, so in the short term at least we are willing to cooperate, but there is a limit to our patience and there will come a time, if nothing is done about the removal of these conditions, when Mr. Taylor frankly will refuse to come to Court, because he regards the imposition of these measures as an affront to his humanity.

FORNAH: So how soon do we expect you and your colleagues to take this kind of action from stopping Mr. Taylor not to come to Court?

GRIFFITHS: Well it depends on how speedily the President of the Court can respond to the written submissions we intend to submit to the Court as soon as possible.

FORNAH: Now [indistinct], don't you think that if Mr. Taylor refuses to show up in Court, that will be a waiver of his rights?

GRIFFITHS: Well, I find it somewhat objectionable and cynical of the Prosecution to adopt such a position, knowing as they certainly do that throughout, Mr. Taylor's been fully cooperative with the Court. He has fully engaged with the court system, unlike in other trials of this kind where defendants have refused to accept the authority of the Court, Mr. Taylor bows when the Judges come in and he bows when they go out, and he's fully engaged in the trial process and has shown respect for the proceedings. Against that background, one must understand how strongly he feels about this issue, and having behaved in that way throughout these proceedings he should find it necessary to say "I will refuse to cooperate in future if these conditions continue."

That was Mariama Khai Fornah in dialogue with QC Courtney Griffiths in The Hague.

Cocorioko website

Wednesday, 27 August 2008

Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor got acquainted at Pademba Road Prisons : Prince Johnson tells TRC



Written by Cocorioko Newspaper Limited

Wednesday, 27 August 2008



SANKOH (LEFT) AND TAYLOR

Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor-- Ex- rebel leaders of Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively--first met and got acquainted with each other at Sierra Leone's Pademba Road Prisons, another former rebel leader, Liberia's Prince Johnson, told his country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Tuesday.

In a marathon testimony that held Liberia spellbound whole day, Prince Johnson, one of the key figures in the Liberian war which spilled over into Sierra Leone , said that Charles Taylor was detained and jailed at Pademba Road Prisons when he returned to Freetown, where he had first lived , to plead with the late President Joseph Saidu Momoh for Liberian rebels being trained in Libya to use Sierra Leone as a transit point to enter Liberia to overthrow the then dictator, Ge. Samuel K. Doe.

Prince Johnson, who threw many bombshells at the hearing, said that after he was jailed Charles Taylor was given 25 lashes everyday by prison officers in Sierra Leone. Then he became acquainted with Foday Sankoh, whom the Liberian rebel said was then being detained by President Momoh for planning to stage a coup. During the course of their friendship in jail, Mr. Johnson continued, Sankoh substituted for Taylor and received the 25 lashes every day in sympathy for the would-be Liberian rebel chief. It was at this time that Sankoh vowed to overthrow Momoh's government on his release.

Last Updated (Wednesday, 27 August 2008)

BBC

Tuesday, 26 August 2008

Life on the Edge - The Unforgiven

By Steve Bradshaw

Executive Producer, Life on the Edge

Wearing his candy-striped shirt and white tie, Pastor Joshua Milton Blahyi preaches forgiveness with the energy and charisma of a Southern Baptist preacher.

His congregation in the suburb of Monrovia, Liberia's capital, are with him all the way - applauding, weeping, praying.

Among the worshippers are young men who most certainly need forgiveness - former warlords, and less celebrated ex-combatants who took part in Liberia's long civil war.

But what is really remarkable is that none of them have quite the notoriety of the preacher himself.

"I have abused a lot of rights. I went fighting, killing a lot of people, destroyed a lot of people, people who were not even part of the problem," says Pastor Blahyi.

War crimes

During the horrific Liberian conflict, Joshua Milton Blahyi was known as General Butt Naked.

I remember hearing about him in 1995 when I reported from Sierra Leone during its overlapping civil war.

By 2005, when democratic elections sealed the end of the war in Liberia, he was one of the best known of Liberia's warlords - although he was by no means the only leader to transgress so many moral and legal norms.

Fighting naked, except maybe for boots and ammo belt - either as "spiritual" protection to deflect harm, or more knowingly as a form of psychological warfare - is not unknown in some African conflicts (witness some of the Mai-Mai in the Democratic Republic of Congo).

But Joshua Milton Blahyi also confesses to more horrific wartime rituals, from human sacrifice to cannibalism.

And some of the other ex-combatants in the chapel with him admit to rape and other war crimes.

It's always possible some of these are misplaced boasts rather than confessions. But like anyone who reported these conflicts in the 1990s, I know myself how bloody and gruesome they could be. What's more, it is still possible - if perhaps unlikely - that individuals may be prosecuted for war crimes in Liberia.

So confessing is not without possible consequences, and the pastor may well need forgiveness.

Weighing the options

“ My question is: 'Why does the Westerner think that if a man is a killer, then he's going to remain a killer?' ”

Joshua Milton Blahyi

He was preparing for battle on a bridge in Monrovia, he says, when he was converted: "When I met Christ I saw an image of a man - this guy was bright, very bright [so] that I could not look at him twice."

Prosecuting the pastor would presumably not help the 50 young men in his congregation who he says he is now trying to rehabilitate.

But aren't some crimes so terrible they can never be forgiven?

This is a dilemma Joshua Milton Blahyi himself recognises.

The truth is that many in Liberia say all war crimes must be forgiven, and not just because of the country's widely and passionately-held Christian beliefs.

Many also reckon it is the only way forward for the country. Once prosecutions of ex-combatants start, it is feared, the process could be endless, and could easily rekindle the fighting.

Joshua Milton Blahyi is one of dozens who have given evidence to Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

It is expected to report next year on the way forward, and Liberia's democratically elected government is still weighing its options.

Former President Charles Taylor is currently on trial in The Hague for war crimes allegedly committed in Sierra Leone - whose conflict is the subject of an international Special Court.

Appeal for forgiveness

The general-turned-pastor has also spoken about leaving Liberia. Who can say what future awaits him?

He makes a plausible case why he should be forgiven. And, perhaps more surprisingly, he also explains eloquently why he should be punished.

"If the punishment deserved, according to law - and for the future history of this country - is death, fine. If it is to be hanged, fine. If it's life imprisonment, fine. Or if they can pardon me, fine also," he says.

"The last time I gave the government and the nation two options; either collect every one of us, dig one big hole and cover us to die. Or they consider us, and work with us to give us some discipline, and use us as rebuilding tools."

Liberia isn't the only African country in which forgiveness is seen as a more Christian course - and a more pragmatic one - than retribution.

"In some instances that may be appropriate," says Justice Minister Philip Banks, "but in others it indicates the wrong signals."

"I am trying to do a lot of good to appeal for their forgiveness," Joshua Milton Blahyi says of the war's innocent survivors.

"My question is: 'Why does the Westerner think that if a man is a killer, then he's going to remain a killer - why is it so?'"



Liberia is peaceful now but prosperity is a long way off



'I ate children's hearts'

While considering the wisdom of this carefully judged remark, it is worth remembering the history of the man who made it.

Life on the Edge is broadcast on BBC World News on Tuesdays at 1930 GMT. The films were made for the BBC by TVE.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
26 August 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

President's Office Responds to 'Email Exchanges' Discussing Shady Business Deals

(The Analyst, The Informer)

- The Executive Mansion is gravely concerned over recently unearthed email exchanges allegedly bearing the addresses of individuals purportedly discussing business deals involving government's pending negotiations with the Liberian Maritime Registry (LISCR).
- More disturbingly and of grave magnitude is the linkage the purported email exchanges attempt to draw between the Office of the President and the deals allegedly being discussed.
- Given the gravity of the matter, the President has directed the Ministry of Justice to expeditiously conduct a thorough investigation into the matter, with the view of establishing the authenticity of the purported email exchanges.
- The mandate of the Ministry of Justice is to first establish the authenticity of these emails and the second step will be to address the results of those findings.
- The President has also directed the Ministry of Justice to request the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, in consultation with the Liberia National Bar Association, to designate an Independent Special Prosecutor, to probe the legal implications of the allegations and make recommendations on the necessary actions to be taken by the Liberian Government.

New AFL Strength Reaches 2,000

(Daily Observer, National Chronicle)

- The Commander-in-Chief (C-I-C) of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has disclosed that the numerical strength of the restructured national army has reached its full expected strength of 2,000 personnel.
- According to President Sirleaf the new soldiers, who have already completed a period of advanced training under the general supervision of the United States Government, will graduate on Friday August 29 2008 at the Edward Beyan Kesselly Barrack formerly Camp Schefflin in Margibi County.

Former Rebel INPFL Leader Testifies Before TRC Today

(National Chronicle, Heritage, The News, New Democrat, The Inquirer, The Analyst, Plain Truth, New Vision)

- The media reports that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has confirmed the appearance of Nimba County Senator Prince Johnson today. Senator Johnson had earlier promised to appear before the TRC on August 26 to tell his story despite initial opposition to the composition of the commission.
- Former General Johnson headed the defunct Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia which captured and killed President Doe. Meanwhile, the TRC has announced the appearance of the ex-leader of the disbanded Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) rebel movement of Sekou Damante Conneh on Wednesday. A TRC release said former interim President Dr. Amos Sawyer is also expected to testify at the hearings on Thursday.

Joe Wylie Identifies November 12 Coup Plotters

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

- An active participant in the failed November 12, 1985 Quiwonkpa Coup invasion has identified several individuals who he said assisted and facilitated the coup. Mr. Joe Wylie, who claimed he is a revolutionary democrat, told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that the point-members of the failed coup were Roberts Philips, Harry Greaves, James Holder and now President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
- He told the TRC that the coup was decided and formulated in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where the members of the True Whig Party (TWP), the Progressive Alliance Party (PAL) and the Movement of Justice in Africa (MOJA) had to pretend as though they had put away their disagreements yet they did not trust each other to allow Boima Fahnbulleh come across to Liberia to execute the coup plot.

Ellen Signs Anti-Corruption Act - Commissions Several Public Officials

(The News, The Inquirer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has signed into law an Act establishing the Anti-Corruption Commission. In remarks at the signing ceremony, the President welcomed the measure, noting that it will help government's efforts to fight corruption, a factor she said is critical to the realization of some of the major objectives of Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- The President made the statement Thursday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when she signed into law several legislations adopted recently by the National Legislature. The legislations include an 'Act To Establish The Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission'; 'An Act To Repeal The National Law of 1956, The Coast Guard Act of 1959, And The Liberian Navy Act Of 1986 And To Establish The New National Defense Act' as well as 'An Act To Establish The Liberian National Red Cross Society' submitted by the National Legislature.

Flag Day Orator Calls for Unity

(National Chronicle, Daily Observer)

- The orator of this year's Flag Day programme, Stella Maris Polytechnic President, Sister Mary Laurene Brown says the flag should be seen as a symbol for unity and patriotism. Sister Laurene said unity would ensure that everyone creates a national goal while pursuing the accomplishment of that goal. She said being a patriotic citizen; one must take his destiny in his own hands while at the same time give direction to his government. According to the Flag Day Orator the idea of taking initiatives to form community watch teams should be adopted to tackle national goals such as education, agriculture among others.

New Finance Minister, Others Sworn In

(Daily Observer, The Analyst)

- President Johnson Sirleaf has commissioned a number of government officials recently confirmed by the Liberian Senate. According to an Executive Mansion release, those commissioned at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs included Augustine Ngafuan, Minister of Finance; Hon. O. Natty B. Davies, Minister of State Without Portfolio; Hon. Jackson E. Doe, Minister of Transport and Amara Konneh, Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs. Others commissioned include, George Wallace, Advisor to the President on Foreign Affairs; Counsellor Estrada Bernard, Legal and Security Advisor to the President and Johnny McClain, Liberia's Ambassador to Senegal.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 10:00am)*

President Sirleaf Visits Libya

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has lauded the Libyan leader for the rice production programme his country has embarked upon in Liberia, saying it would go a long way in strengthening government's initiative aimed at self-sufficiency in rice production.

- President Sirleaf informed Col. Muammar Gaddafi of the steady progress being made toward the construction of a vocational and technical school in Virginia.
- The two leaders also discussed strategies for promoting the vision of the African Union being spearheaded by the Libyan leader.
- Col Kaddafi pledged his government's willingness to support all African countries to positively respond to the food crisis.
- President Sirleaf and party arrived in Libya Monday afternoon and were met by senior Libyan government officials.

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

DEA Destroys Marijuana Farms in Bong County

- The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in Bong County has destroyed five marijuana farms in the Duta area in Kpahi District.
- In an interview, the Officer-in-Charge of the Bong County DEA, Col. Alphonso Rancy the farms were destroyed Monday during an operation co-named "Operation Stop Cultivation" carried out in collaboration with the Liberia National Police.
- Col. Rancy said other security units that aided the DEA operation are the Nigerian Formed Police, UNPOL and the Bangladeshi contingent of UNMIL.
- He said more than three hundred trees were destroyed during the operation, while eight suspects were picked up and more than ninety-two kilograms of marijuana seized.
- The value of the drug is put at more than LD\$100,000.

Key War Actor Appears Before TRC Today

Rivercess Medical Chief Calls for Support

- The Medical Director of the St. Francis Hospital in Rivercess County, Dr. Malano Saa has called for an expansion of the hospital to meet the health needs of the county.
- Dr. Saa said the hospital does not have an ambulance and lacks sufficient beds to accommodate the influx of patients in the county.
- According to him, the hospital also lacks a Surgical Department, a Director's office and a Morgue to keep dead bodies.

Orator Calls for Unity
