

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



The Registrar presented certificates to members of the Special Court's Security staff at a ceremony yesterday in the temporary courthouse.

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:

Friday, 17 October 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Spectator
Friday, 17 October 2008

More victims testify in Taylor's trial

*By Mariama Khai Fornah
in The Hague*

Almost every day victims of amputation, rape and other forms of atrocities by rebels loyal to the RUF in Sierra Leone are making their way to the Dutch city of The Hague to testify against the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor. Mr Taylor is accused of sponsoring acts of terrorism meted out by the erstwhile rebel group.

In just two days the prosecution has produced seven victims of the war as witnesses. The 59th prosecution witness, an amputee, told the judges of the Special Court that the rebels amputated a six-year old girl and placed it in the mouth of a dead police officer in the northern town of Kabala. Sieh Mansaray said the rebels remarked that the hand was meant to be the policeman's last food.

He quoted the rebels as saying that they started their orgy of amputation with the 6-year-old was indication that they would not spare anybody. Mansaray also testified that in Kabala the rebels amputated several civilians including a woman who was eight months pregnant.

He said a rebel commander gave instructions for the amputation of the ci-

vilians on a piece of paper.

The witness went on to say that prior to the amputation, the rebel commander had told his men to prioritise the burning of houses in Kabala decide the fate of the civilians later. "They said go, go to Kabala, say these hands that have been cut off, tell them these were the hands which you used to vote for the civilian government..."

Earlier the 50th prosecution witness had told the court that he was captured and stripped naked along with 50 other residents of Tumbudu in the eastern Kono district and forced to mine for diamonds for the rebels. Tamba Yomba Ngekie said rebels aged six, ten and eleven years held civilians at gunpoint while they mined. He said the rebels brought another 70 civilians, with one tied

in the waist. He recalled the severe flogging and shooting of one S.E Songbeh for saying that he was too weak to mine following an order by one of the rebel leaders that anybody who refused to work be shot. "Then he asked Mr. Songbeh, 'are you the one who said you were not going to work? Are you the one who said you are not going to work?' And he shot him three times. Then he fell down. We were sitting down there, wanting to cry. How could we have?" Tamba told the court.

The third witness who took the stand was a woman who said she suffered sexual violence at the hands of the rebels. 50-year-old Roko Turay said she was raped by three of the rebels: On cross-examination, she clarified that the rebels who raped her spoke in Krio, and that she did not hear any of them speaking Liberian English.

A new batch of witnesses is expected to take the stand.

[This same article appeared in several other papers]

3rd Session: 64th Prosecution Witness Ibrahim Kai Takes the Stand

Justice Teresa Doherty has returned to the Court and as Presiding Judge invited Prosecutor Kathryn Howarth to continue her examination in chief.

Amputation

After his hand had been amputated the fighters told the witness to leave and he left. He went on the road to Yadu. He saw a lot of AFRC/RUF fighters on his way and passed about eight checkpoints. Some rebels saw him and said it would not be good for their reputation if others saw an amputee and they wanted to kill Bindi. Bindi ran away from them into a bush. At one moment he fell and lost consciousness. When he woke up he was bleeding and held up his wrist so he would lose less blood. Bindi went on his way again.

He reached Koikuima the same day on April 18, 1998. ECOMOG soldiers had told him the date, it was a Thursday. His arm was treated, he was given medicine and food and a place to sleep. He met other amputation victims there. The next day Binda and other amputation victims were taken by vehicle to Freetown to the Connaught hospital for further treatment. His wound was stitched.

Life after the amputation

Sahr Bindi explained that the wound to his head often troubles him. It gives him headaches and sometimes causes his nose to bleed. His amputation caused him not to be able to work anymore. Now he is a beggar. His survival depends on the discretion of people who give him money. To feed his children is a problem. It has stripped him of his dignity.

Cross-examination

Lead Defense Counsel Griffiths began his cross-examination and established the following. Since his amputation Bindi has not worked. Before his amputation Bindi was a trader in the Kono area for about two years. Prior to the rebels coming to that area life in Kono was good, there were no problems. Kono is famous for diamond mining. The witness has engaged in diamond mining. Until April 1998 many Marakas and Lebanese were involved in diamond trading. After the rebels arrived many people left including the witness. This was the first time the witness came in touch with rebels.

The witness is familiar with the names of the rebel leaders Superman, Savage and Staf Alhaji and stated they are three different persons. The ones who captured the witness were AFRC and not RUF. Bindi fled to Guinea and when he thought it was safe he returned to Koidu. That is where he encountered Staf Alhaji for the second time. Alhaji had a boss based in Tombudu but the witness did not know his name. The witness does not know the name of the man who ordered his hand to be cut off, but he knows he is from the RUF, they were rebels in mixed clothing, while AFRC soldiers were always dressed in full combat.

The witness has heard that Samuel Komba is in The Hague but did not travel together with him nor stays with him in the same house. Samuel Komba told the witness, when at the time Bindi helped him bind his arm, that the men who amputated his hand were AFRC/RUF, but Komba did not tell the witness a specific name, neither that it was Savage who cut the hand of Komba. Since April 1998 Binda has not been able to work for a salary. In January 2005 Binda was paid by the OTP (Office of the Prosecutor) money for lost wages. Binda said that this was for transportation and meals, but it was not a salary.

Re-examination in chief

Prosecutor Howarth did a brief re-examination in chief, pointing out that payments by the OTP were always combined amounts not for lost wages alone, but for lost wages, transportation and meals.

The document relating to the OTP disbursements is marked for identification as MFI-1 and is tendered by the Defense as evidence and becomes exhibit D64.

Sahr Bindi asked the Court to say a few words, which was granted. He thanked everyone for bringing this Court into existence. He asked the members of this Court to be sympathetic to the amputation victims who can no longer work to support their families and would like the Court to use some of their money to help the victims provide for their children's education. Justice Doherty answered with saying that this Court does not have the power to do what the witness is asking, but she will ask the WVS (Witness and Victims Section) of this Court to help Bindi find organisations who can help him look for that. She thanked Binda for giving his testimony and the witness was dismissed.

64th prosecution witness TF1-097

The next witness is a category one witness and will testify in open session without protective measures. Prosecutor Mohamed Bangura will examine the witness. The witness is sworn in on the Quoran and will testify in Krio.

Introduction

The name of the witness is Ibrahim Wai, age 47, from the Mende tribe. Wai used to be a fisherman, now he is a beggar. He is married and has four children. He has education up to form 6. He speaks Mende and Krio.

Events in December 1998

In December 1998 Wai was working as a fisherman in Tombu in the Western area where he had been living for 17 years. On December 23, 1998 rebels entered Tombu at about 3 o'clock in the night. They burnt houses. They were AFRC/RUF soldiers who came from Waterloo. Wai woke up and saw the house of the neighbours on fire. Two rebels came into his house. One of them was a man called Mohamed who was known to the witness. Mohamed was dressed in full combat, the other was dressed in half combat. Mohamed told Wai to gather all his possessions including money. The witness had to follow the rebels up to the hospital junction. There he saw many more rebels. He had to put down the bag with possessions and was told to leave and not look back. He fled into the bush. Many others were fleeing. Wai spent the night in the bush and went back to town the next morning. Houses had been burnt, people had been killed. Three children of a man called Pa Prat were lying dead by their family's house. In total the witness saw six corpses. He saw six houses that had been burnt. After having seen what had happened he left to go to Freetown, the part that is called Kissi Town. It took him four days to reach there.

Events on January 6, 1999

Around 3 o'clock in the night he saw fire outside. Wai and his younger brother left the house and went to Ferry Junction. Many people were there, civilians and ECOMOG soldiers. Wai and his brother went to the Academy compound and stayed there for about five days. After that he left to return to Kissi Town, but on the way he met an RUF rebel who asked the witness for money. The rebel took his watch and his ID card and let him go. The witness later reached Kissi Town.

At this moment the witness is distressed and Court is adjourned a little earlier than usual at 4.20 p.m. until tomorrow 9.30 a.m.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 16 October 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

War Crimes Court Demonstration Called Off

(The News, The Inquirer and The Monitor)

- The Inquirer newspaper reports that a march intended to raise awareness for the establishment of a War Crimes Court in the Country was halted yesterday but Government has denied impeding the process.
- The News newspaper said authorities at the police headquarters and at the Justice Ministry declined to comment on why the demonstration was impeded to the extent that the demonstrators had to call off their march without presenting their statement.
- The Secretary General for the war crimes court advocates, Mr. Boakai Jaleiba contended that his group had sought permission from the government to parade the principal streets of Monrovia and thereafter present its petition to the United Nations but that the heavy security presence had made them call off the march.
- However, in a reaction to the claim, Information Minister Lawrence Bropleh said government did not stop the march but rather took the requisite steps to ensure that the march went ahead.

Bong County Superintendent Suspended

(The News, Daily Observer, New Democrat, National Chronicle, The Analyst, Heritage, The Inquirer, The Monitor and The Informer)

- The media reports that Bong County Superintendent, Rennie Jackson has been suspended with immediate effect.
- An Executive Mansion release said President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf suspended Superintendent Jackson for what the Mansion called certain reported financial malpractices in the use of the county's development funds.
- The President informed Superintendent Jackson in a letter that he would remain suspended pending findings and recommendations of an investigation to be undertaken by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- Meanwhile, the President has directed the Ministry of Justice to ensure that a Liberian owned contractual firm, MAK Incorporated, immediately restitute USD\$147,927.17.

UN Envoy Wants Local Government Leaders Exhibit Leadership Qualities

(The Analyst and Heritage)

- The Deputy Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Mr. Jordan Ryan has urged Liberian local government leaders to continue to engage and energize their people to propel the development agendas of their counties.
- Speaking at the opening session of a leadership training programme for county and development superintendents in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, he said a leader has to truly encourage and energize the people.
- Mr. Ryan, who is the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Recovery and Governance, said the capacity building of the local administrators was part of efforts by the UN and development partners to make county administrations effective in delivering development to the people.

Public Works Signs US\$15.9M for Monrovia Street Rehabilitation

(Daily Observer, The Informer and National Chronicle)

- The Ministry of Public Works yesterday signed a US\$15.9 million contract agreement with China Chongqing International Construction Corporation (CICO) in Monrovia which is geared towards the full rehabilitation of Monrovia streets.

- Speaking at a brief signing ceremony at the Public Works Ministry, Minister Loseni Dunzo said the Special Implementation Unit (SIU) and the Ministry's officials have worked diligently to make the initiative a living reality.
- Minister Dunzo further disclosed that Monrovia's streets rehabilitation work was expected to be completed within 24 months as stipulated by the agreement.
- In remarks, the World Bank Representative Gylfi Palsson underscored the need for collaboration among partners associated with the road project noting that that effective collaboration will ensure a successful implementation of the agreement.
- The project is being funded by the World Bank

Radio Summary

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

Bong County Superintendent Suspended

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

Police Investigates Rivercess Gender Coordinator Following Violence

- Police are investigating the Gender Coordinator of Rivercess County after violence erupted at a local women's group election.
- The women electorate attacked Mr. John Trade for what they called dissatisfaction over transportation reimbursement.
- The women alleged that money given them does not commensurate with what they spend to get to Cestos City.

Three-Day Seminar for Journalists, Teachers Opens in Monrovia

- A three-day training seminar for journalists, school administrators and teachers has begun in Monrovia.
- The training seminar is intended to strengthen the capacity of the participants to play a more desired role in addressing gender-based violence issues.
- The training which is under the auspices of the Christian Empowerment and Sustainable Programme would also ensure the rights of women to live in a violent free society.
- A CESC release said the training is the first in the series of nationwide initiatives being sponsored by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Gender and Human Rights sections.

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

Star Radio (Liberia)

Wednesday, 15 October 2008

TRC not disappointed over Taylor's decision

Written by Julius Kanubah

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission says it is not disappointed over the denial of an audience with detained former President Charles Taylor.

The TRC wanted audience with Mr. Taylor but both Taylor and his lawyer Courtenay Griffiths refused the move.

TRC Chairman Cllr. Jerome Verdier said the commission is satisfied with the due diligence given Mr. Taylor although it was rejected.

The TRC Chairman did not disclose the names of the six persons who refused to face the commission.

He said they gave reasons ranging from security to legal issues and other excuses.

Commissioner Verdier said the TRC is already successful and was working to work on its last success of making recommendations.

Taylor's lawyer has said that without hearing from the detained former President, the TRC process will be useless.

African Press Agency

Thursday, 16 October 2008

Liberia-TRC-Reparations

Prominent Liberian wants Gaddafi, Compaore pay reparation to war victims

APA-Monrovia (Liberia)- A former close aid of slain President Samuel Kanyon Doe, Edward Slinger, has recommended that Muammar Gaddafi and Burkinabe President Blaise Compaore who bankrolled Charles Taylor's rebel incursion into Liberia on 24 December 1989, be made to pay reparations to Liberian war victims.

Continuing his testimony at the ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Thematic and Institutional hearings Wednesday, Slinger said the insurrection launched by Charles Taylor's rebels resulted in the destruction of property on a mass scale and the deaths of more than 250,000 persons.

Both Libya and Burkina Faso, he claimed, allowed Taylor who later rose to become an elected president of Liberia, to use their respective territories as military training grounds for Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebels.

Slinger, a former officer of the Armed Forces of Liberia, called on Liberians to galvanize to demand for reparation from the two African countries.

In separate testimonies at the ongoing TRC hearings, high ranking officials of the defunct NPFL, including former President Moses Blah, a founding member of the erstwhile NPFL, confirmed that the NPFL was fully supported by Libya, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire.

Blah also confirmed that the first batch of weapons used to invade Liberia was provided by leaders of the three countries.

He confirmed that NPFL rebels were also trained in Libya and Burkina Faso.

Hirondelle News Agency (Lausanne)

Thursday, 16 October 2008

ICTR to Host Forum on How to Fight Culture of Impunity

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) will host a two-day forum between Offices of the Prosecutors of the United Nations ad hoc criminal tribunals and national prosecuting authorities between November 26 and 28 in Arusha, reports Hirondelle Agency.

The Forum will share ideas and experiences between the international system and national authorities with the view to fighting the culture of impunity and human rights violations. The gathering comes at an ideal time when two UN adhoc tribunals-- for Rwanda and ex-Yugoslavia-- are approaching their exit strategies.

Both the Rwandan and the former Yugoslavian tribunals' have revitalized the international criminal jurisprudence that had not developed since the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials.

According to information posted on the ICTR website, the Forum is expected to be an important stepping stone in building an international legal regime for mutual legal assistance and co-operation among those fighting impunity.

The Forum will be attended by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), International Criminal Court (ICC), Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

National prosecuting authorities invited include Rwanda (which was victim of 1994 genocide), the United States, Belgium, Canada, Kenya, New Zealand, the Netherlands, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Norway, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Swaziland, Benin and Japan.

Others are: Mali, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Congo-Brazzaville, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Nigeria, Zambia, Lesotho, Senegal, Central African Republic, Ghana, Cameroon and Australia.

In addition, representative from the East African Court of Justice, African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, African Commission on Human rights, International Police (Interpol), Eurojust, US, UK and Canadian respective war crimes offices, have been invited.

The Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to participate include the US-based Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and International Centre for Transitional Justice and International Criminal Defence Attorneys Association, among others.

At the end of the closed-door session, the participants are expected to propose mechanism in fighting jointly the culture of impunity and suggest items for consideration at the annual Prosecutors' Colloquium.

The Funding for the meeting has been provided by the John D & Catherine T McArthur Foundation.

BBC Online

Friday, 17 October 2008

Bashir war crimes charges delayed

Omar al-Bashir is accused over attacks on civilians in Darfur

Judges at the International Criminal Court have asked for more evidence before deciding whether to issue an arrest warrant against Sudan's leader.

Chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo wants the court to issue a warrant for President Omar al-Bashir over war crimes allegedly committed in Darfur.

Mr Ocampo has been given a month to provide the additional evidence.

President Bashir has denied the charges and Sudan has been lobbying to get the investigation delayed.

The African Union and Arab League agree with Sudan that any arrest warrant could jeopardise the peace process in Darfur.

The UN estimates that up to 2.7 million people have been forced from their homes and some 300,000 have died during the five-year conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST BASHIR

Genocide:

Killing members of the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups

Causing these groups serious bodily or mental harm

Inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about these groups' physical destruction

Crimes against humanity:

Murder

Extermination

Forcible transfer

Rape

Torture

War crimes:

Attacks on civilians in Darfur

Pillaging towns and villages

Bashir move bold but problematic

Sudan's government has always denied charges that it armed the Janjaweed militias accused of widespread atrocities against civilians in Darfur.

Mr Bashir launched a new initiative to bring peace to Darfur on Thursday, however the rebels and opposition parties did not take part.

One rebel spokesman said the move was an attempt to "circumvent" international justice.

Mr Moreno Ocampo asked the ICC to issue an arrest warrant against Mr Bashir in July, saying there were grounds to believe Sudan's president bore criminal responsibility on 10 counts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

But a statement from the ICC on Thursday said that prosecutors must submit "additional supporting materials in relation to some confidential aspects" of the prosecution's request by 17 November.

Alex de Waal, an expert on the Darfur conflict based in the US, said it was very unlikely that it would affect the likelihood that the pre-trial chamber would issue an arrest warrant against Mr Bashir.

"What is not in much doubt is that the charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity will pass the rather low threshold... It's almost inconceivable that the pre-trial chamber would throw out those charges."

But he said the court may say there is insufficient evidence to bring "credible charges" of genocide against the Sudanese president.

Black African rebels took up arms in 2003, accusing Mr Bashir's Arab-dominated government of ignoring the region.

He blames the violence on the rebels and says the extent of the suffering has been exaggerated by the West for political reasons.

The Independent

Thursday, 16 October 2008

Ten years on from Pinochet's arrest, dictators are no longer safe

By Kate Allen

Some dates that particularly resonate with me. Today is one. 16 October 1998 was momentous not just for us at Amnesty International but more importantly, for the people of Chile as it was then when General Augusto Pinochet was arrested in the UK on charges of crimes against humanity – the worst crimes in the world.

General Pinochet's arrest sent shockwaves not only across Chile, where his military junta ruled from 1973 until 1990, but around the world. It presented a seismic shift in the landscape of international law. From that moment on, the precedent was set that no head of state – past or present – is immune to being charged and prosecuted for carrying out crimes against humanity.

Augusto Pinochet was the mastermind of horrific human rights abuses in Chile during his military junta. Sanctioned by him, thousands of people were subjected to torture, unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, illegal detentions and forcible transfers.

Men, women and children were rounded up in their droves by the military and taken from their homes, most were never seen alive by their families again. Ten years on, Amnesty International is still supporting families and Chilean local organisations that are assiduously pursuing justice for the victims.

One woman called Ana González recently recalled her experiences of that dreadful period. She spoke of how her two sons, Manuel and Luis Emilio, who were 23 and 29 respectively at the time, and Luis Emilio's three-month pregnant wife were arrested in September 1976 and never seen by their families again. More than 30 years on, the only information she has ever received about any of the three is that Luis Emilio's body had been thrown into the sea.

Still now, the whole family is struggling to deal with the emotional and psychological traumas of that time as they live with the knowledge that they may never discover what happened to their relatives, she told us.

Tragically for the people of Chile, General Pinochet – who died two years ago – was never brought before a court of law, on grounds of ill health, and so died without providing answers for the victims or their relatives.

But the events that took place in London ten years ago today meant that General Pinochet did not completely elude justice.

His arrest provided some respite for the victims and their families. Survivors and their families rallied to pursue justice with renewed vigour, and with the knowledge that the international community was fully supporting their case.

Globally, world leaders realised that their position could no longer shield them from being brought to task by international justice, and it wasn't long before more international charges were brought against heads of states.

Less than a year after General Pinochet's arrest, the president of former Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic became the first sitting head of state to be charged with crimes under international law. And in 2003, the

internationally recognised Special Court for Sierra Leone indicted the former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, with 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity against the people of Sierra Leone.

It is difficult to know for certain whether the charges brought against these two leaders would have occurred had not the arrest of General Pinochet taken place. But what is clear is that Pinochet's arrest proved that anyone who commits such heinous crimes can no longer hide from the consequences of international justice.

Kate Allen is Director of Amnesty International UK