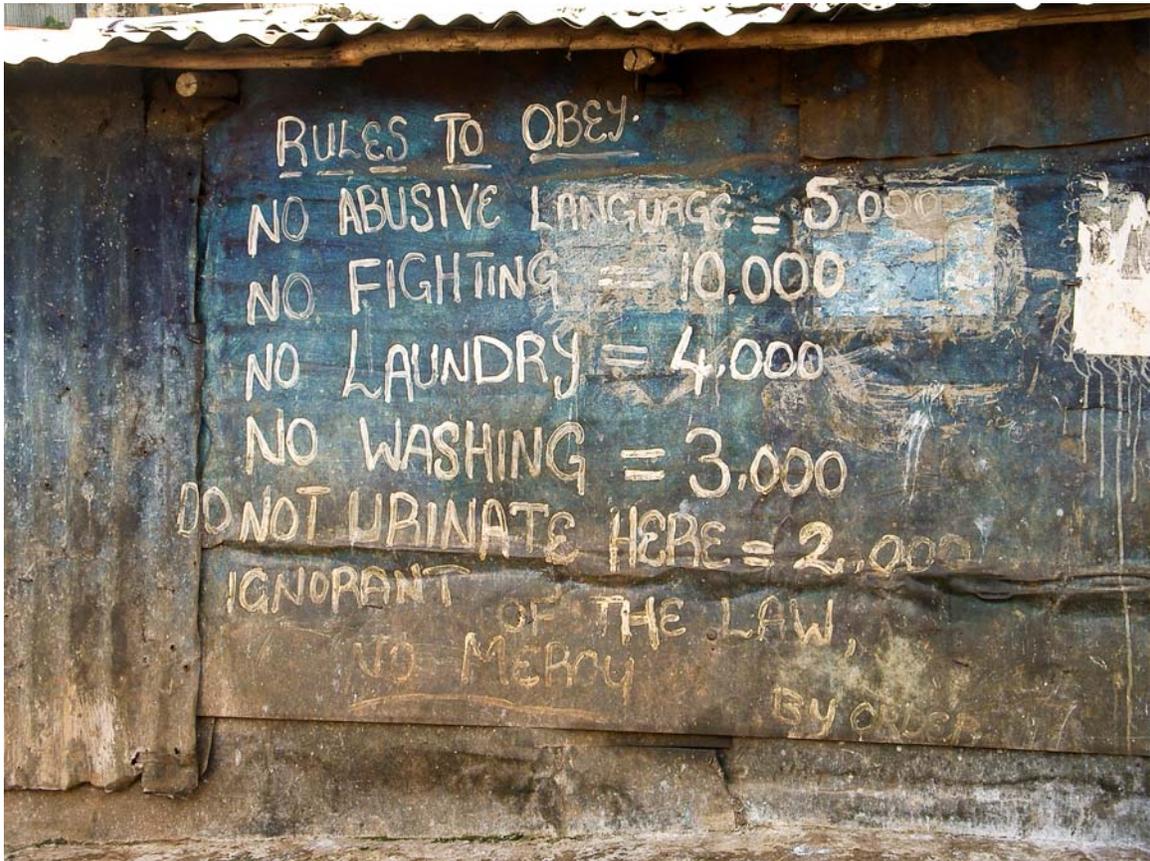


**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Wall in Kroobay. Photographer: Anne DeVoe

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:

Thursday, 23 October 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 22 October 2008

Former girl rebel tells ordeal

By Mariama Khai Fornah in The Hague

A former member of the Smalls Girl Unit of the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has testified in the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor on how civilians, among them children, were trained and used as attendants by rebel commanders.

Edna Bangura told the court that in April 1994 three RUF rebels raped her when she was 10 years old as the rebels attacked the northern town of Masingbi, in Tonkolili District. The 66th prosecution witness said her primary school was hosting their annual athletics meet when the rebels struck rudely interrupting it.

She said she was raped by the rebels who abandoned her in the bush and was later discovered by the then RUF patrol commander OC Blood who took her along with him. He gave her a very heavy load which she carried walking several days from Masingbi to Buedu in Kailahun District.

Edna said she underwent a 2-week training in a camp around Buedu together with 50 other captives trained by training instructor Monica Pearson whom the witness alleged spoke Liberian English. He explained how she used to carry a gun even though she was very young. "Because I was very small, the gun had a belt and at any time I wanted to use the gun I would just take the gun, put it somewhere higher than my height and then I would go underneath it and put it round me. I would put the gun somewhere that is taller than me and then I would go underneath it and put my head through the belt and then put it round me."

After her training she went on, she was enlisted in the Small Girls Unit (SGU) which together with the Small Boys Unit (SBU) comprised young girls and boys aged between 10 and 13 years, captured and conscripted by the rebels.

Edna said the rebel commanders used the SBUs as security guards who carried guns wherever their bosses went, and the SGUs as house help to the wives of the rebels. She said that life was only "safe" for women and girls in the jungle when they had a rebel they would point to as their "husband". She said women in the jungle without rebel husbands were treated far worse.

Responding to a cross-examination by prosecution lawyer Courtenay Griffiths the witness admitted that there were some errors in her previous interview. She testified in court that three rebels raped her, but she had previously told investigators that four rebels did. She attributed the inconsistency to the fact that she was meeting "such people" for the first time, saying she was not of a 'steady mind'.

Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust

Report from The Hague

Thursday, 23 October 2008

Charles Taylor's Defence team earlier this month accused the Prosecution of the Special Court for Sierra Leone of misusing the money of the Court by bringing witnesses from Africa to testify for just ten minutes or less in the trial of Mr. Taylor. Lead Defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths QC described the transportation of the crime based witnesses to The Hague as waste of resources.

The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court, Mr. Stephen Rapp has reacted to Mr. Griffith's criticism.

The BBC World Service Trust Mariama Khai Fornah started by asking Mr. Rapp to explain the reasons behind the manner in which the prosecution is presenting its witnesses.

RAPP: Well the reason that these witnesses are having to come was because the Defence has demanded their presence. We had proposed at one time to bring as many as 72 witnesses' *testimony* to Court in the form of writing. Many of them have given sworn statements to the horrible experiences of them being victims of rape and amputation and sexual slavery and forced labour and having been child soldiers, and our rules would allow that testimony to come in in writing through a sworn statement. Many of them had actually testified in Freetown in the RUF or AFRC cases. The Defence, however, objected to that. They said "no, we're not going to let that testimony in unless they come to The Hague and unless we have an opportunity to cross-examine them." And the Judges said yes indeed, they do have the right, if they wish, to demand that these people be present. Now understand the reason we were doing them in writing was, one, to save them the hardship of having to travel here and relive these kinds of experiences, and two, the Rules allow it because they're not testifying to seeing Charles Taylor. They're testifying to seeing a rebel, to seeing a person that committed this crime against them, and our Rules say because their testimony doesn't go directly to his acts and conduct, we can do that in writing.

FORNAH: Mr. Griffiths also mentioned that if the Prosecution should have met the Defence team and presented concise or strictly relevant witnesses, that these are the witnesses we want to present to the Charles Taylor case, that they should have agreed. But now you are saying they refused.

RAPP: Well indeed, they did refuse. I mean we asked early on, we put forth a stipulation of facts in terms of the crimes being committed in these various districts. It was very clear and specific and didn't have any extraneous language in it. But they refused to go along with that. They would barely stipulate to anything – perhaps the dates of Mr. Taylor's tenure in office, the dates of the war in Sierra Leone, the political leadership, a few other issues like that. But beyond that, they wouldn't stipulate that these crimes were committed in Sierra Leone and certainly wouldn't stipulate to them having been committed by RUF forces or AFRC forces. So, we had to present evidence. Then we went to work and got these people's prior statements, struck out all the irrelevant matter, sent it all in, in many cases absolutely no mention of anybody even speaking Liberian English in the presence of these witnesses, so no direct connection to Taylor, and they *still* demanded that these witnesses come. They're saying in public one thing and in Court they're doing another.

FORNAH: Mr. Rapp, the Prosecution has prepared a lot of witnesses, but yet the Defence is saying some of these witnesses are not relevant and that they have no [indistinct] in what Mr. Taylor is being accused of. How can you respond?

RAPP: Keep in mind, we have to do two things here. We have to prove that Mr. Taylor was connected to the people that committed these crimes, but then we have to prove that those people *did commit* the crimes. We could present the linkage testimony, the Moses Blah, the Zigzah Marzah's, the Varmuyan Sheriff's – all those kind of witnesses. We could show a link but we still have to show that the crime was actually committed. We have to prove that murder and rape and sexual slavery and pillage and the use of child soldiers and amputation and acts of terror and collective punishment were committed in each of these districts of Sierra Leone. If we don't, we lose our case. I mean, I'm not going in there to lose a case. I have to present my evidence. Obviously Mr. Griffiths cares less whether we win our case. I mean, he doesn't want us to win our case. So we have to present our evidence and we have to meet our burden of proof, and we propose to do that with, initially, 144 witnesses – 72 in writing, 72 in person. We've now, because it looks like there will be no in-writing witnesses, we've cut the list both in the linkage

and in the crime base end to the bare minimum that we think that we reasonably need here, and that's going to be about 96 live.

FORNAH: Let me just come in here. The Defence team for Mr. Taylor has said that this is not a TRC commission. The case of Mr. Taylor is a criminal case and you are saying you want the people to come and testify so you prove your case.

RAPP: Well, we have to prove that these crimes took place. We of course allege that these crimes have occurred in places like Freetown, the Western Area, in Kono, in Kenema, in other districts of Sierra Leone. And we specifically alleged that. And if we fail to prove that that crime occurred in that place, the Defence, when they file this "no case" motion which they're promising to file as soon as we conclude our evidence, would be able to go in there and say "the crime of rape in Kono, that needs to be stricken" – and they'd succeed because we wouldn't have proved the evidence. We don't have to bring in 15 people to prove that rape happened in Kono. We have to bring in one good witness, but we've got to do it in each district. And then of course we've got to be aware of the fact that the Defence will cross-examine these people, and sometimes that does require some corroboration because we have to be on the safe side. It's a tough burden that the Prosecution have to meet, beyond a reasonable doubt. And many people's recollection of these events, because of the trauma they experience, may not be perfect. So we have to make sure that we've proven this case. And that's what we're doing – we're meeting our obligation. The commitment, the mandate that I was given and those of us that work in the Office of the Prosecutor were all given, to make sure that the truth of this victimisation, of these horrendous crimes, is presented and the truth of the connection between these crimes and Mr. Taylor is also presented.

FORNAH: As far as (indistinct) you, the Prosecution side, all of your witnesses are relevant.

RAPP: Yes, absolutely. If we've charged Charles Taylor with rape in Kono, we have to prove that the rebels raped a person in Kono, and then we have to prove that Taylor had some control or he aided and assisted those rebels knowing that they were committing rapes and that the kind of assistance that he was giving was causing those kind of atrocities to be continued in Sierra Leone.

FORNAH: With all those witnesses you are coming with in the Court, the Defence is still grumbling that it's a waste of resources because most of the witnesses are just spending ten minutes in Court to testify. How can you respond to this?

RAPP: That's because the Defence demanded that they be here. We've tried to cut down the amount of time that they're going to have to be on the stand. Some of the crime base witnesses we're bringing in – and we think it's fair that they be allowed to tell their story and actually repeat their story on direct examination. In other situations they've given their full testimony previously in trial. They described it very clearly. We can present that evidence to the Judges in writing. But we can't do that unless the witness is physically present because the Defence is demanding. Then it's up to the Defence to cross-examine. If the Defence, having demanded that this person come, then don't even ask any questions, if they've only got ten minutes of questions, that's an outrage. They shouldn't have demanded that they come. They are the ones that demanded that these people be here. We were ready to put them in in writing. These people have given sworn statements, they've given prior testimony in many cases. That should have been sufficient.

That was the chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Mr Steven Rapp.

Star Radio (Liberia)

Tuesday, 21 October 2008

Taylor's trial: Prosecution, defense argument delays session

Written by Wellington Geevon Smith

The trial of detained former President Charles Taylor was on Tuesday delayed for more than one hour in The Hague.

The delay was caused by an argument, which erupted between the prosecution and defense lawyers over a motion filed by the prosecution.

The prosecution called for the protection of Witness TF1-67th in court against being seen by the public.

The witness according to a July 5, 2004 decision of Trial Chamber One in Freetown, witness TF1-158 was entitled to protective measures such as voice and facial distortions.

The Defence Team of Mr. Taylor objected to the prosecution motion to maintain the protective measures.

The defence stated in its objection that the protective measures of July 5, 2004, were necessary at the time because the witness was a child.

Defence lawyer Terry Munyard told the court the protective measures were no longer applicable to this witness because the witness has reached 21 years of age.

The court recessed for five minutes to allow the parties reach a solution, after which it resumed session.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
22 October 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

President Sirleaf Celebrates 1000 Days in office amidst mixed public sentiments

(The Inquirer, The Analyst, Daily Observer, New Vision)

- It has been exactly 1000 days since Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took the oath of office. Four of the ten publications which appeared on the newsstand today -- The Inquirer, The Analyst, Daily Observer and New Vision - reflected mixed public sentiments about successes, failures and challenges of the government. Many people concurred that the Sirleaf administration has made a lot of progress in the last 1000 days. The highlights included progress toward overall debt relief under a Poverty Reduction Strategy; the conclusion of renegotiation of major concession agreements, particularly with Mittal Steel and the attraction of a large number of investors, with potential for major investments throughout the country in the mining, oil, agriculture and forestry sectors.
- The administration was also complimented for making progress with the commencement of the construction and rehabilitation of roads throughout the country. Supporters of the government think that these positive developments signaled a vote of confidence in Liberia, particularly the leadership of President Sirleaf.
- However, some critics, according to The Inquirer, New Vision, and The Analysts newspapers are of the opinion that the administration has done little to improve the livelihoods of ordinary Liberians as hardship remains pervasive. Despite the sacking of corruption public officials, other critics perceived the President as having been selective in her fight against corruption and urged tougher measures including prosecution of corrupt elements in her government. Others thought that tackling mass unemployment remains an outstanding issue confronting the government. President Sirleaf apparently agreed with this perception when she admitted few months ago that one of her government's weaknesses is the continuing level of unemployment in the country.

Commissioner's Offices Burglarized in Nimba County

(Daily Observer)

- [sic:] The newly constructed administrative headquarters of the Bain-Garr District near Zuluyee Town in Nimba County has in recent times suffered series of burglaries. The District Commissioner, Emma Konah reported two cases of burglaries in late September and early October with window glasses, plastic chairs, office desk and other items stolen.

Bad Roads Cut off Maryland

(Daily Observer)

- Bad road conditions in Maryland County, described as "the worst in the country", have stalled development and hindered the movement of people in that part of the country.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 9:00 pm)*

TRC Begins Hearings on Reparation Today

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) in collaboration with partners and stakeholders today began a three-day public hearing on reparation.
- The commission says after two years of work it was necessary to review the practical realities of addressing the reparations needs of victims, witnesses, and perpetrators of the Liberian Civil war.
- According to a TRC release, the objective of the hearing is to know and understand the value, cost and consequence of providing reparations on the TRC process, and to generate public opinion.
- The TRC said it is conducting the hearing on reparation in partnership with the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation of the United States of America and is being held under the theme "Charting the Course of the TRC Reparations Agenda".

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

Normal Work Briefly Stalled at Transport Ministry Tuesday

- Normal work at the Transport Ministry was temporarily interrupted on Tuesday when some employees blocked the entrance of the building preventing people from entering it.
- The aggrieved employees were demanding benefits they claimed the Ministry owes them and the replacement of Deputy Transport Minister; Mohammed Sheriff who they accused of being responsible for the delay in receiving their allowances.
- The situation was later brought under control following an appeal from Minister Jackson Doe for the employees to return to work.

Information Minister Threatens "Ineffective" Public Relation Officers with Dismissal

- Information Minister Laurence Bropleh has threatened to dismiss Public Relations officers of Government that are not discharging their functions effectively.
- In an interview, Minister Bropleh said despite several trainings, some PR officers are yet to grasp their responsibility making it difficult for government policies and programmes to be disseminated to the public.
- He said there was a need for coherence in Government's communications strategy and to avoid conflicting information coming from government institutions.

Star Radio *(News monitored today at 9:00 am)*

Strike Action Hits International NGO

- Workers of the International Medical Corps (IMC) have embarked on a strike action simultaneously in Monrovia and Lofa County in demand of benefits.
- In separate interviews, the IMC workers said since they started working with the organization over four years ago and management has failed to meet their needs.
- The workers named medical, transportation, housing and severance benefits as some of their needs that are not being met by the IMC management.
- The workers' spokespersons, Stephen Zor and Darr Gbainmo accused their management of ignoring their plights vowing that the strike action would continue until their demands are met.
- However, the Finance Manager of IMC, Briggs Kallon said the organization's Country Director, Dr. Sham Alam was not prepared to talk to journalists.

Resolution Awaits President Sirleaf in Washington D.C.

- Liberians in the United States have prepared a two-count resolution to be presented to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Washington D.C.
- The resolution seeks to address the compounding problem of American children born onto Liberian mothers currently stranded in the U.S. and the Liberian Refugee Fairness Act seeking permanent residency for Liberian refugees in America.
- The resolution calls on President Sirleaf to prevail on President Bush to provide protection for

Liberian refugees in the U.S.

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

Acting Pro-Temp Denies Receiving Money

- The Acting President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Lahai Lassana says he has not received a dime in his capacity as presiding officer.
- Senator Lassana said the embattled Pro-Temp Isaac Nyenabo continues to receive his official salary and other benefits.
- He dismissed reports that his leadership clandestinely withdrew 178 thousand US dollars from the budget of the office of Pro Temp.
- The acting Pro-temp spoke to reporters Tuesday following a meeting with a delegation from the International Monetary Fund. The meeting focused on the IMF's assistance to Liberia and the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

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