

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



Diamond mines along the Sewa River in Kono District

**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:**

Tuesday, 28 October 2008

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

Tuesday, 28 October 2008

### **Taylor Defence Says Kabbah Recruited Liberian Rebels**

By Mariama Khai Fornah in The Hague

The defence in the trial of the former Liberian president Charles Taylor has said that former Sierra Leone president, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and his Government recruited Liberians who fought alongside his forces. Defence lawyer, Morris Anyah said Mr Kabbah admitted to the recruitment of the Liberians.

Mr. Anyah read out in court what he said were testimonies Mr Kabbah made to the before his country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission admitting to the recruitment of Liberians into the Sierra Leone security apparatus.

The document quoted Mr. Kabbah as saying that fighters loyal to the Liberian dissident group, ULIMO, under the command of one Brigadier David Livingstone Bropleh were incorporated into the Sierra Leone security forces and renamed Special Task Force. Anyah asked the 72nd Prosecution witness, Alpha Jalloh if he knew that those who amputated him on January 18, 1999 were ULIMO fighters. The witness denied knowing which faction they fought for but stressed that they were Liberian soldiers.

Continuing from the TRC document, Anyah quoted former president Kabbah as saying that Brigadier Bropleh later fled Freetown with the AFRC junta forces, and that the Liberian commander later fought against ECOMOG troops.

The defence lawyer went on to say that Bropleh's forces "played an active role in all the attacks that displaced ECOMOG and government troops in such places as Koidu, Makeni, Kamakwie and Lunsar" as well supported the January 6, 1999 attack on Freetown.

73rd Prosecution witness, Samuel John who had previously testified in the AFRC case in Freetown was only presented to the Defence for cross-examination.

74<sup>th</sup> prosecution witness, Akiatu Tholley said the rebels who entered Freetown on January 6, 1999 flogged and dragged her until she lost unconsciousness. She said the rebels entered a church and raped many of the displaced girls and women. Prosecution Lawyer Brenda Hollis asked Akiatu to explain what the rebels did to her.

"Well at the time we were in the church, James forced me. He raped me and he damaged me" she said. Asked what she meant by "damaged me", the witness said she needed sometime, apparently to stabilise her emotions.

*Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust*

## BBC World Service Trust

Tuesday, 28 October 2008

### **Interview: Taylor's prosecutor fires back at defence**

The defence team for the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor early this month accused the Prosecution of the Special Court for Sierra Leone of misusing the court's money by bringing witnesses from Africa to testify for just ten minutes or less in the trial of Mr. Taylor. Lead Defence counsel, Courtney Griffiths QC described the transportation of the crime based witnesses to The Hague as waste of resources. Well now the Prosecutor of the Special Court, Stephen Rapp has reacted to Mr. Griffith's criticism.

In The Hague, Mariama Khai Fornah asked Mr. Rapp to explain the reasons behind the manner in which the prosecution are presenting their 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 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.

Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust

## BBC World Service Trust

Monday, 27 October 2008

### Report from The Hague

A young Sierra Leonean woman captured by rebels on January 6, 1999 in Freetown has testified to being raped, forced to eat human flesh, injected with cocaine, and made to commit unlawful killing. Miss Akiatu Tholley told the Judges she escaped to safety with an unwanted pregnancy. The Prosecution witness identified her captor as Colonel James of the former Liberian rebel group ULIMO. The BBC WST Mariama Khai Fornah has the details

Miss Akiatu testified in Krio and told the Judges of the Special Court Kamajors killed in battle by the rebels were cooked and sometimes made into barbecue and given to civilians as a meal. The witness said she reluctantly participated in eating the Kamajors' hearts.

Prosecution lawyer Brenda Hollis inquired from the witness about the fate of any one who refused to eat the rebels' human meal.

HOLLIS: Now you said that they asked you to eat the hearts forcefully. What do you mean by "forcefully"?

WITNESS: Well, if anybody refused eating it, that person would be killed.

HOLLIS: How many of the civilians ate these hearts?

WITNESS: We were many.

HOLLIS: Did you eat some of the hearts?

WITNESS: Yes.

HOLLIS: Did you try to refuse?

WITNESS: At first I attempted refusing to eat it.

HOLLIS: And what happened when you attempted to refuse?

WITNESS: When I refused they beat me up and they said if I didn't eat it they would kill me.

HOLLIS: What was your reaction to having to eat this heart?

WITNESS: I did not feel fine. That was terrible.

FORNAH: Akiatu said Captain James, the rebel who captured her in Wellington in Freetown, forced her into marriage. The witness said she attempted escaping but was captured by some rebel boys. She told the Court her rebel husband, Captain James, boiled marijuana and gave it to her and injected her with cocaine. She testified she was sent on mission with some rebel boys. Akiatu said she unconsciously shot and killed a woman.

HOLLIS: Now can you tell us what happened? You're in this village, you have this woman and her children. What happens after you were given the jamba?

WITNESS: When they gave me the marijuana it was then that I killed the woman.

HOLLIS: And when they told you you should kill the woman, did they tell you why you should kill the woman?

WITNESS: Yes.

HOLLIS: What did they tell you?

WITNESS: Well, after they had told the woman to come with us and the woman refused, that was the reason they told me to kill her.

HOLLIS: Now what happened after this woman was killed?

WITNESS: We took her children, two of them, and we gave them the load to carry and went back to Masiaka.

FORNAH: The witness testified two women who attempted escaping were recaptured, tied, and marked on their breasts AFRC and RUF with a razor blade.

On cross-examination, Akiatu confirmed that cannibalism, or human eating, was common among the rebels. The witness testified she travelled with the rebels from Wellington, Waterloo, Masiaka, and Lunsar. Defence lawyer Morris Anyah questioned the witness on some inconsistencies in the Prosecution previous interviews with the witness.

ANYAH: in Krubola what exactly was this fight you were engaged in?

WITNESS: Well, they sent us there to go and fight, to kill civilians and to loot property.

ANYAH: Did you ever fight against another rebel group?

WITNESS: No.

ANYAH: Did you ever kill anybody during the conflict?

WITNESS: Yes.

ANYAH: And where did you kill the first person that you killed?

WITNESS: Well the first person that I killed was in Masiaka.

ANYAH: And under what circumstances did you kill that person?

WITNESS: Well, it was at the time James's boys asked us to join them to go in search of food.

ANYAH: Was this a man or woman that you killed?

WITNESS: A woman.

ANYAH: Was it an adult or was it a child?

WITNESS: An adult woman.

On re-direct examination, Akiatu told the Judges the rebels destroyed her future. She suffered three miscarriages, and was forced to eat human flesh - something as a Muslim she would never forget. Akiatu said despite Issa Sesay's warning to the rebels not to loot and rape, the rebels looted and raped with impunity.

After Akiatu left the stand, a Sierra Leone school teacher who spent ten months with the rebels took the stand. Mr. Paul Conteh was only presented by the Prosecution for cross-examination. Paul told Defence lawyer Courtney Griffiths that he was opposed to the RUF because they committed lot of atrocities. Paul said he was a strong supporter of the idea which said election before peace. Paul completed his testimonies and Mr. Abraham Fofana, a Sierra Leonean with both hands amputated, took the stand. Mr. Fofana is expected to complete his testimonies on Tuesday.

For the BBC WST this is Mariama Khai Fornah reporting from The Hague.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Tuesday, 28 October 2008

## **Morning Session: Testimony of Ibrahim Fofana Continues; Court Adjourns Early to Prepare for Video to be Shown**

### **Examination of Ibrahim Fofana continued**

Prosecution Counsel Julia Baly continued her examination in chief of 75th prosecution witness Ibrahim Fofana. The witness continued his testimony where he left off yesterday. He and his family went back home to Paema but then fell into an ambush. Soldiers in full combat came and tied up the witness and others. The house of the witness was put on fire, with his three children and his aunt still in the house. They could not get out and all four of them were burnt alive. The witness and the four others had to carry loads to Tombodu, Kamara Chiefdom. When they reached Tombodu, the rebels took them to one of their commanders, Staff Alhaji and were subsequently tied to an orange tree. A group of 53 people were put together in a house. A report was presented to Staff Alhaji, that 53 prisoners were in the house and that they were from Masundu. The 53 prisoners were locked in and the house was set on fire. There was screaming and then there was silence. Staff Alhaji came to the orange tree and said that ex president Kabbah needed hands to vote for him. He assigned a man, Rambo, to do this. Rambo was dressed in uniform. Rambo amputated the hands of all five men.

At this moment in Court the witness raised his arms and showed his arms to the Court. Both hands are amputated above the wrist.

All five men tied to the tree had their hands amputated. The five were released and went on their way to find ECOMOG. The date was April 5, 1998. Three of them fell down, bleeding profusely; they were older than the witness. The witness said he does not know if they ever got up or died there, he never saw them again. The witness himself and the other man, Mustapha Mansaray, reached ECOMOG who took care of them both. Their arms were bandaged and they were given medicine. The following day they were taken to a hospital in Makeni, but there they could not take care of them well, so the following day they were taken to Connaught Hospital in Freetown. The hospital was full with persons like him. A photograph taken from a video is shown to the witness and he identified the person as himself. The photograph is marked for identification as MFI-1. Since this event he has had two more children. He can not work anymore and begs in the street. His wife takes care of him.

### **Cross-examination**

Defense Counsel Morris Anyah referred to the video where the photograph MFI-1 is taken from. He would like to show the video but the video needs to be tested in the Court room which will take about 30 minutes.

Court is adjourned for an early mid-morning break at 10.15 a.m.

## Cocorioko

Monday, 27 October 2008

### Prosecution says Taylor can testify in person

Written by Joseph Cheeseman

The Prosecution in the trial of the former Liberian president Charles Taylor say he can testify in his case if he so wishes. Special Court prosecutor, Stephen Rapp says the English Criminal Rule adopted by the Special Court will be applied if Mr. Taylor wants to testify. So what does the English law say about a criminal defendant wishing to testify in own case? A question Joseph Cheeseman put Mr Rapp

RAPP: Under our Rules, however, it is important to note that if the Accused testifies, he must testify as the first witness in his case...

CHEESEMAN: He must testify first.

RAPP: Yes

CHEESEMAN: Why is that important?

RAPP: Well this is a Rule that the Court has. It's a Rule that actually is the same as that in the English system in which Mr. Griffiths practices, but to some extent it's to make sure that the Accused doesn't mould his story depending on what others have said in his Defence case. He has to put it on himself first. But it's the Rule, we follow the Rules, and we're looking forward to seeing Mr. Taylor in the box if that's his decision.

CHEESEMAN: Mr. Griffiths estimated that you brought ten crime base witnesses here at the rate of \$20,000 United States dollars. How true is this information?

RAPP: Well certainly, it may be more than that. I mean when you deal with the fact that some of these people are injured and have serious health problems and sometimes have to have a family escort with them. The Court, however, has negotiated a very reasonable fare with an airline that brings these people to Europe, so we do it on a cost-efficient basis. And there is a safe house where there are beds and staffing and everything else. But it certainly costs money to the Court to present this kind of testimony. At one point we moved to allow witnesses to appear by video link, but the Defence objected to that. So we're doing it because we have to, and it's our obligation, it's the mandate, it's my sworn duty to prove this case with the best evidence that I can and prove it according to the Rules.

CHEESEMAN: You described your evidence as compelling, as convincing. Mr. Griffiths has described your evidence as rubbish.

RAPP: It's hard to respond to that kind of language. This evidence of these human beings and what they went through, and the evidence that we presented from one end to the other of the link between Charles Taylor and the war in Sierra Leone is the absolute opposite of rubbish. Now Mr. Griffiths may be familiar with cases in London where police come in with a neatly-typed report and everything is detailed and on closed-circuit cameras, and there's a certain quality of evidence sometimes in those cases, but you get into a situation that I've dealt with in Sierra Leone, and before in Rwanda, in situations where thousands of people are murdered, where millions of people are displaced, where whole communities and institutions are torn apart, in societies that already suffer from underdevelopment, where witnesses don't wear watches, they don't tell time by calendars, and obviously there's going to be some inconsistencies in their

testimony. That's maybe what he's talking about – that sometimes a person says it was three men and other they say it's four men. But essentially their evidence, as we have said, is extremely compelling, and when you add it all up and look at all the ways in which it's corroborated and the network and the pattern that exists here, this is certainly in my experience at the international level, the most compelling case that I've ever seen – at least three times stronger than cases that I've seen presented in other international tribunals. But obviously it's going to be up to the Judges in terms of guilt or innocence and that'll follow the presentation of Mr. Taylor's own defence.

CHEESEMAN: Then Mr. Griffiths also said that the money spent to bring these people here, you should have used that money as reparation to the poor people of Sierra Leone.

RAPP: Well we care a lot about reparation, and we're looking for ways that we hope to be able to pursue Mr. Taylor's assets to provide reparation to victims. The money that the Court has used is money that has been obtained from justice funds from countries that want to see international justice succeed. These aren't funds that go to development projects; indeed there are wide development projects in Sierra Leone that deal with victims. Recently the UN peace building Commission donated three million dollars to the Victim Reparation Fund. Not enough has been done in that area, but it's our position always that it's important that justice be done.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries  
27 October 2008**

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

**Newspaper Summary**

**UN Envoy Wants UNMIL Personnel Exhibit High Degree of Discipline**

(The Informer, New Vision, The Analyst, Liberian Express, Heritage)

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj says personnel of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) must continue to exercise a high degree of discipline to successfully carry out the Mission's mandate. Ms. Løj made the statement when she awarded UN peacekeeping medals to 268 officers of the UNMIL Jordanian Medical Contingent for their contribution towards the maintenance of peace and stability in Liberia.
- Ms. Løj noted that the Jordanian Medical Contingent has been providing medical services to the Mission since late 2003. The contingent has also carried out multiple medical outreach programs in remote areas where medical services are almost non-existent. Contingent Commander, Colonel Omar Al-Ziod congratulated the recipients of the medals who were doctors, nurses, administrative and support officers.

**President Sirleaf Warns Cabinet, to "Shape-up or Shape-Out"**

(New Democrat, Public Agenda, New Vision, Heritage, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The Monitor)

- The media reports that speaking at the opening of a cabinet retreat in Kakata, Margibi County, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says any official who fails to shape up development programs must be prepared to get out of the government.
- President Sirleaf said development has been slower than desired to touch the lives of the Liberian people. She told her cabinet three years in office was enough for learning and it was time they begin the implementation process describing the next three years in office as the real phase of her administration.
- The retreat was to take stock and accelerate the Poverty Reduction Strategy. During the retreat, the cabinet discussed the challenges of the PRS and the way forward. Several Cabinet Ministers made presentations on the four pillars of the PRS and what efforts made by the various ministries and agencies in achieving their goals of the PRS.

**TRC hears from High Profile local and international Journalists**

(The News, The Inquirer, New Vision, The Analyst, The Informer, Daily Observer, The Monitor)

- Several high profile international and local journalists are expected to form part of a panel of media professionals to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Special Thematic hearings beginning today. Former British Broadcasting Corporation Editor, Robin White; Attorney Kwame Clement, a former television anchor of the Liberia Broadcasting System; Isaac Bantu, former Press Union President; Dr. Stephen Ellis, author of the Mask of Anarchy, CNN producer, William Burke will be amongst several renowned journalists to testify at a Media Hearing of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).
- The three-day hearings held under the theme: "The Media and the Liberian Conflict" will examine the role of the local and international media in the Liberian Conflict. Speaking at a news conference at the weekend, TRC Commissioner with oversight for media and outreach,
- Massa A. Washington said the forum will afford journalists the opportunity to share their experiences of the conflict and the impact of the media.

## **Court Denies Detained Senator Bail ...JPC Wants Him Stripped of Entitlement**

(The News, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, Public Agenda, Liberian Express, The Informer)

- Judge Karboi Nuta of the Criminal Circuit Court "B" has denied the counsel for the defendant, Cllr. Francis Garlawolo's motion for the application to admit murder suspect Senator Roland Kaine to bail.
- The resident judge, Nuta, who earlier dismissed prosecution's request to extend the trial of the case to the November term of court considering that the defendant be given a speedy trial, on Friday ruled that Kaine be denied temporary release from prison based on what the court termed as "doctrine of conspiracy" stating that the case with the defendant symbolizes a chain action and as such cannot permit the granting of a bail to a single applicant.
- Earlier, the counsel for the defendant prayed the court to grant his client severance while the case was before the Magisterial Court in Kakata and same was denied.
- The case was then transferred to the circuit court in Montserrado County where an indictment was drawn to which defendant Kaine pleaded not guilty before the court. Meanwhile the Liberian Express newspaper reports that political pressure is mounting to halt the payment of salary and other benefits to the Margibi County Senator. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) accused the Liberian Senate of cheating the Liberian people by refusing to discontinue the salary and benefits of the detained senator.

## **Opposition CDC Suffers Setback during Launch of Membership Drive**

(The Analyst, The Informer)

- The Opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) over the weekend suffered a major setback when majority partisans boycotted a ceremony marking the launch of the party's electronic identification card project. The party had launched the exercise to take stock of its membership and raise money for support of the party. Correspondents say less than a hundred partisans turn out for the exercise.
- Observers have blamed the low turnout of partisans at the launch to a long standing leadership crisis with both Geraldine Doe-Sheriff and Joshua Sackie claiming the party's Chairmanship.

## **Bertha E. Porte's Literacy Centre Dedicated**

(Daily Observer)

- The more than US\$10,000.00 Mrs. Bertha E. Porte's Adult Literacy Centre was on October 25, 2008 dedicated in the commercial district of Painesville, outside Monrovia. Speaking at the dedication ceremony, German Ambassador to Liberia, Ilse Libdemann urged adult learners and other Liberians to enrol and pursue the valuable tool of education. Earlier in remarks, Mr Elfric Porte disclosed that more than US\$10,000.00 was invested in the centre to ensure that adults and children who never had the opportunity to read and write benefit and become productive citizens of Liberia.

## **Radio Summary**

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

### **Media Practitioners Begin testifying before Liberia's Truth Commission**

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

### **"Shape-up or Shape-Out" - President Sirleaf Warns Cabinet**

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

## **Opposition Party Records Poor turnout during Launch of Membership Drive**

### **Criminal Gang Attacked neighbourhood in Central Monrovia**

- After months of silence the notorious "Issakaba" boys early Sunday morning struck the Benson and Newport streets community slightly wounding a resident.
- In an interview, one of the victims, Winifred Davies said the criminals armed with cutlasses and other dangerous weapons broke into their homes and robbed them of several valuables.
- Meanwhile, residents of the area have expressed fear and urged the Liberia National Police to extend its night patrol to communities and not restrict it to the streets.

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AFP

Monday, 27 October 2008

### **Warlord Says Burkina Faso President Ordered Predecessor's Ouster**

A former Liberian warlord has told AFP in an interview that Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore ordered him and his men to remove his predecessor Thomas Sankara from power in 1987.

One of Africa's longest-serving leaders, Compaore -- then deputy to Sankara -- has always denied playing a role in the death of Sankara, assassinated during the coup in 1987 which brought him to power.

Prince Johnson told AFP and Radio France International in the interview Sunday that he was part of a group of Liberian mercenaries commanded by Charles Taylor who had arrived in Burkina Faso on a separate mission, to plot the overthrow of Liberian President Samuel Doe.

But while they were in the country, "the second in command, Blaise Compaore, had asked us to help him get Thomas Sankara out of power," Johnson said in the interview.

"He said this was the only way we could live in Burkina Faso without any threat. And Sankara was killed in the process. We did it because that is the only way we could stay in Burkina and prepare our attack against Doe."

"Blaise Compaore was everything there. He controlled the military barrack and the special commandos' forces that were in charge of the presidential palace. So it was very easy to penetrate."

Burkinabe government spokesman Philippe Sawadogo condemned the allegations as "barely worthy of fiction".

"I ask myself who is behind these fabrications," Sawadogo said, adding that the allegations "are very simply an intention to attack our country's image".

Johnson has already told Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in August that he took part in Sankara's assassination, but did not say who ordered the killing.

Taylor and Johnson were allies in the early 1980s, but they later fell out, with Johnson forming a rival organisation to Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Johnson is now a member of Liberia's senate.

Known for his brutality, which included the videotaping of his fighters torturing and killing Doe in 1990, Johnson was the first former warlord to testify before the TRC since it started its hearings last year.

Taylor is currently on trial for war crimes before the UN-backed Special Court of Sierra Leone in The Hague.

## Earthtimes

Monday, 28 October 2008

<http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/>

### **Ecowas Court Finds in Favour of Former Slave in Landmark Ccase**

Niamey, Niger - A West African court of justice on Monday found the government of Niger guilty of not protecting a woman against slavery despite laws abolishing servitude. The Court of Justice of the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) forced the Niger government to pay the plaintiff, 24- year-old Hadijatou Mani, 19,750 dollars in restitution, according to a BBC report.

The landmark ruling is to be binding on all 15 ECOWAS members, including Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone.

Mani, who was sold into slavery at the age of 12, brought the case against the government in April this year, claiming that despite Niger's official abolition of slavery, the government provided no protection to her.

Mani who was forced as a child to work in a household and in agriculture was raped multiple times by her "owner." She was officially freed in 2005 but was sentenced to jail for bigamy when she attempted to marry against her former owner's wishes.

A spokeswoman for the organization Anti-Slavery International called Mani a "heroine" for her stand. According to the organization, there are around 40,000 people enslaved in Niger, despite the country's making it illegal five years ago.