

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



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, 20 January 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Cocorioko

Tuesday, 20 January 2009

Taylor defence team says he had no vendetta against Mandingos

Written by Mariama Khai Fornah in the Hague

The Court resumed Monday morning in The Hague with the new Presiding Judge, Richard Lussick. After the formal opening of the Court, the Liberian journalist Hassan Bility, who has been on the witness stand for one week, ended his cross examination. The Defense team of Charles Taylor said their client had no personal vendetta for the Mandingos in Liberia. Defence lawyer Courtenay Griffiths said Mr Taylor demonstrated his love for the Mandingos by sponsoring Muslim pilgrims to Saudi Arabia.

FORNAH: Lead Defense Lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths has told the Judges that Charles Taylor had no bitterness against the Mandingo ethnic group in Liberia.

He said Mr. Bility was not arrested because of his ethnicity as a Mandingo.

Mr. Griffiths made reference to Mr. Taylor's marriage to a Mandingo woman as an evidence of the former Liberian president's love for the Mandingos.

Lead counsel said his client Mr. Taylor also employed members of the Mandingo ethnic group into his government.

BILITY: It is my position that President Charles Taylor and his government also viewed Mandingos and Krahs with some high level of suspicion.

GRIFFITHS: So your position is he was anti-Mandingo?

BILITY: I believe he was very suspicious of Mandingos.

GRIFFITHS: Is it not also right that there were many Mandingos in his government?

BILITY: There were Mandingos in his government.

GRIFFITHS: One of them being your uncle, Musa Sesay.

BILITY: Yes sir, counsel.

GRIFFITHS: And also, is it not right that Mr. Taylor a traditional wife who was a Mandingo by the name of [Fatimata]?

BILITY: I'm not sure if there was an official wedding, but he did have a female associate with him referred to as his wife and called Mrs. [Hadja Fatimata] Taylor.

GRIFFITHS: And was she a Mandingo?

BILITY: Yes sir.

GRIFFITHS: Is it not also right that Mr. Taylor annually sponsored up to 200 Muslims to attend the Hajj to Mecca?

BILITY: Yes.

GRIFFITHS: And for the most part, those that benefited from that government largesse were Mandingos, weren't they?

BILITY: Yes sir.

FORNAH: Mr. Bility concluded his testimony by saying Mr. Taylor's pronouncement about press freedom in Liberia was completely different from actions taken against journalists who were critical of the government.

However the Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, has taken on the next witness who is the Chief of Evidence and Archive at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Mr. Tariq Malik, a Pakistani national, has been answering questions about evidence gathered from the home of former RUF leader Foday Sankoh in Freetown.

The document shows a series of information ranging from communication to transportation of arms and ammunition. Mr. Malik identified in court the documents that showed different communication evidence exchanged between the rank and files of the RUF, AFRC. The Prosecution witness Malik also identified documentary evidence that existed between the former RUF Foday Sankoh, Mr. Charles Taylor and AFRC Chairman Johnny Paul Koroma in 1997.

Mr. Malik, the Evidence and Archive Chief of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, testified to some eleven sets of documents seized from Charles Taylor's White Flower residence.

The witness said the documents were found during a search on March 5, 2004 by Liberian officials on the request of the Prosecutor of the Special Court.

The Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, asked the witness to identify the documents seized from Mr. Taylor's residence in Monrovia.

MALIK: One called "Documents relating to civil war in Liberia. Another would be Charles Taylor's external activities.

RAPP: Witness, talking about these that relate to the civil war in Liberia, what did these documents look...

MALIK: First one, it says Salute Report from General Warning, I think dated 1994. It's addressed to Charles Taylor. Second documents is ATU – that is Anti-Terrorist Unit report called Deployment. It is addressed to Charles Taylor Junior as commander, I believe. The third report, third document, it's a handwritten paper which appears to deal with immunity for actions or crimes committed during the civil war in Liberia from 1989 to August 2003.

FORNAH: At the same the Defense team told the court that Mr. Taylor would not attend the Court hearing on Friday, January 23. No reason was given, but lead Defense lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths said the former Liberian leader has given his consent for the trial to go ahead in his absence.

For the BBC World Service Trust, this is Mariama Khai Fornah reporting from The Hague.

BBC World Service Trust

Monday, 19 January 2009

Report From The Hague

After one week of direct and cross-examinations by both Prosecution and Defense, Liberian Journalist Hassan Bility has ended his testimonies against Former President Charles Taylor in The Hague. The Defense Team said Mr. Taylor had special preference for members of the Mandingo ethnic group in Liberia. Defense Lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths traced what he called Mr. Taylor's traditional marriage and the sponsorship of Muslim pilgrims to Saudi Arabia as evidence of the Former Liberian Leader's love for Mandingos. Joseph Cheeseman reports.

Lead Defense Lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths has told the Judges of the Special Court that the accused Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor had no animosity against the Mandingo ethnic group in Liberia. He said Mr. Bility was not arrested because of his ethnicity as a Mandingo.

Mr. Griffiths spoke of the employment of Mandingos in Taylor's government, and also made reference to Mr. Taylor's traditional marriage to a Mandingo woman as evidence of the Former Liberian Leader's love for Mandingos.

Mr. Bility concluded his testimonies by saying Mr. Taylor's pronouncement about Press freedom in Liberia was completely different from actions taken against Journalists who were critical of the government.

Meanwhile, the Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp himself has taken on the next witness who is the Chief of Evidence and Archive at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Mr. Tariq Malik, a Pakistani National has been answering questions about evidence gathered from the home of Former RUF Leader, Foday Sankoh in Freetown.

Some of the documentary evidence identified by Mr. Malik spoke of communications exchanged between Former President Charles Taylor, Former RUF Leader, Foday Sankoh, Former AFRC Chairman, Johnny Paul Koroma in 1997.

Mr. Malik, the Evidence and Archive Chief of the Special Court for Sierra Leone testified to some eleven sets of document seized from the Charles Taylor's White Flower Residence during a search on March 5, 2004 by Liberian Officials on the request of the Prosecutor of the Special Court.

The Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp asked the witness to identify the documents seized from Mr. Taylor's residence in Monrovia.

At the same the Defense Team told the court that Mr. Taylor will not attend the court hearing on Friday, January 23. No reason was given, but Lead Defense Lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths said the Former Liberian Leader has given his consent for the trial to go ahead in his absence.

UN News

Monday, 19 January 2009

Solid peace in West Africa requires collaboration in meeting challenges – UN report



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

West Africa continues to strengthen its hold on peace and stability, but the 15-nation region needs a well-coordinated approach to overcome food uncertainty and the effects of the global financial downturn, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says in a report released today.

Mr. Ban calls on the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) to continue to facilitate closer cooperation among UN agencies, sub-regional organizations and other actors to meet those challenges, as well as election-related issues, security sector reform, human rights, transitional justice, and the rule of law.

He says that UNOWA, the groundbreaking regional peace-building office based in Dakar, will continue to play a mediation role in cross-border conflicts, including the follow-up on the settlement of the Nigeria-Cameroon dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula.

He encourages the Office, while fostering closer collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union, the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU), to continue working closely with other international organizations to promote coordinated support for the sub-region.

According to the report, the Office will place a stronger emphasis on conflict prevention and peace-building in general, and should be encouraged to boost its role in addressing the threat of drug trafficking in the region, in coordination with ECOWAS and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

In December 2007, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNOWA – based in Dakar, Senegal and currently headed by Said Djinnit of Algeria – until 21 December 2010.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
19 January 2009**

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

Newspaper Summary

TRC Commissioners Split Over 'Preliminary' Report to Legislature

(Daily Observer, Public Agenda, The News, New Democrat, Heritage, National Chronicle, The Analyst)

- The local dailies reported on an apparent division among commissioners of Liberia's Truth Commission (TRC) over a report supposedly submitted to the National Legislature recommending the establishment of a special court to try those guilty of rights abuses during Liberia's brutal civil wars.
- Four TRC Commissioners - Dede Dolopei, Sheik Kafumba Konneh, Gerald Coleman and Cllr. Pearl Brown Bull- denied having knowledge of the report and called on the Legislature to reject it. The division stemmed from remarks by another Commissioner, John Stewart, who recently told a local radio talk show that the TRC had sent a preliminary report to the Legislature and that the final report will be presented in June this year.
- The development comes after a former warlord now Senator Prince Johnson claimed the commission was preparing to indict a raft of former warlords for crimes, citing a confidential TRC report he said he had obtained. The TRC was set up in 2006 to probe war crimes and rights violations during the period, marked by savage killings.

Government Declares Zota District Emergency Zone

(Daily Observer, The News, New Democrat, The Inquirer, National Chronicle, The Analyst)

- The Liberian Government has declared a national emergency in Zota District, Bong County, following the invasion of the area by army worms.
- Hundreds of thousands of insects known as army worms attacked several towns and villages in central Liberia, destroying an important quantity of crops.
- A seven-strong team of experts had reported back from Belefania in Zota District, Bong County, saying that the situation there was "alarming and worsening." The team, which is led by an entomologist, reported that the worm-like caterpillars were consuming all vegetation in their path and polluting creeks and running water with their faeces.
- Specialists from government farming, health and environmental protection agencies have spraying of insecticides in the affected areas. Agriculture Minister Christopher Toe said that the

Police Strength Exceeds UNMIL's Benchmark ...Cites Upsurge in Criminal Activities

(The News)

- The News newspaper reports that the strength of the Liberia National Police currently stands at 3,800 thus exceeding UNMIL's 3,500 benchmark. The strength of the police reached 3,800 following the last Saturday's graduation of 139 newly trained officers. Quoting the Commandant of the Liberia National Police Training Academy, James Hallowanger, the paper said the Police decided to exceed the benchmark due to the upsurge in criminal activities in the country.
- Col. Hallowanger said the Police hope to reach 4,000 or more because there are 150 incoming recruits. Also speaking at the occasion, Police Inspector General, Beatrice Sieh Browne hoped that with the graduation of the additional officers to beef up the strength of the Police crime would be minimized. For her part, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-

General for the Rule of Law, Ms. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu pledged UNMIL's continuous commitment to the development of the LNP.

BR Increases Investment to US\$150M

(The News, Daily Observer)

- Two landmark agreements have been signed in Monrovia between the Government of Liberia (GOL) and Buchanan Renewable (BR) Power. The two agreements involved a US\$150 million increased concession agreement between GOL and BR Power as well as a power purchase agreement between BR and the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC).
- The two parties signed the agreement at the weekend. According to the Minister of Lands, Mines and Energy, Dr. Eugene Shannon, Buchanan Renewable would use the facility of the Liberia Electricity Corporation. Minister Shannon explained that under the agreement, LEC would purchase power from the BRE and distribute same to the public.

Liberia, China Break Grounds for US\$10M Hospital in Tappita

(Heritage, The Analyst)

- The Governments of Liberia and the People's Republic of China have broken grounds for the construction of a US\$10M referral hospital in Tappita, Nimba County. Speaking during the groundbreaking ceremony, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf lauded the Government of China for its demonstrated commitment for the development agenda of the Liberia, describing China as a reliable partner that keeps it promises.
- Chinese Ambassador to Liberia, Zhou Yuxiao, in remarks, said China is a developing country that is also in need of hospitals, but noted that the need in Liberia is much greater.
- Ambassador Zhou said mutual support between the two countries is essential in building a strong partnership. He spoke of Liberia's commitment to the one-China policy and the country's support for China in the United Nations Security Council, as concrete manifestations of the growing partnership between the two countries.

Radio Summary

Local Media – Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 9:45 am)

Division among TRC Commissioners Over Report to Legislature

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

President Sirleaf Tours Project Sites in Bong County

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has toured a number of development projects in Bong County, expressing satisfaction regarding the level of progress taking place at the sites.
- An Executive Mansion release says the President over the weekend toured Chinese- run rubber processing factory, the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI), a proposed agriculture technology centre, being built by the government of the People's Republic China and a hybrid rice development project in Kpatawee, also being supervised by Chinese agricultural experts in Bong County.
- Chinese Ambassador Zhou Yuxiao, said his country remains supportive of the government's efforts to meet its goal of self-sufficiency in food production.
- Ambassador Zhou put the cost of the agricultural technology centre at US\$5 million and said it will be fully functional in a year and a half.

Supreme Court to Hear Rate of Certiorari in Hans Williams and Fiancée Case

- The full bench of the Supreme Court is expected to this week hear arguments into the petition for the rate of certiorari it received from the Justice Ministry against the recent decision of Criminal Court "A" to grant murdered suspects Hans Williams and Mardea Paykue to bail.
- The constitutional court last week requested Judge Boimah Kontoe and Defense lawyers for the accused to justify why the State's petition should not be granted.

- Supreme Court Justice in Chambers, Justice Jamesetta Wolokollie had forwarded to the court the writ of certiorari filed to it by the Justice Ministry against the recent ruling of Criminal Court "A" to put the accused on bail
- Meanwhile, the court also ordered a halt to further proceedings in the case.

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

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

Zota District Declared Emergency Zone
