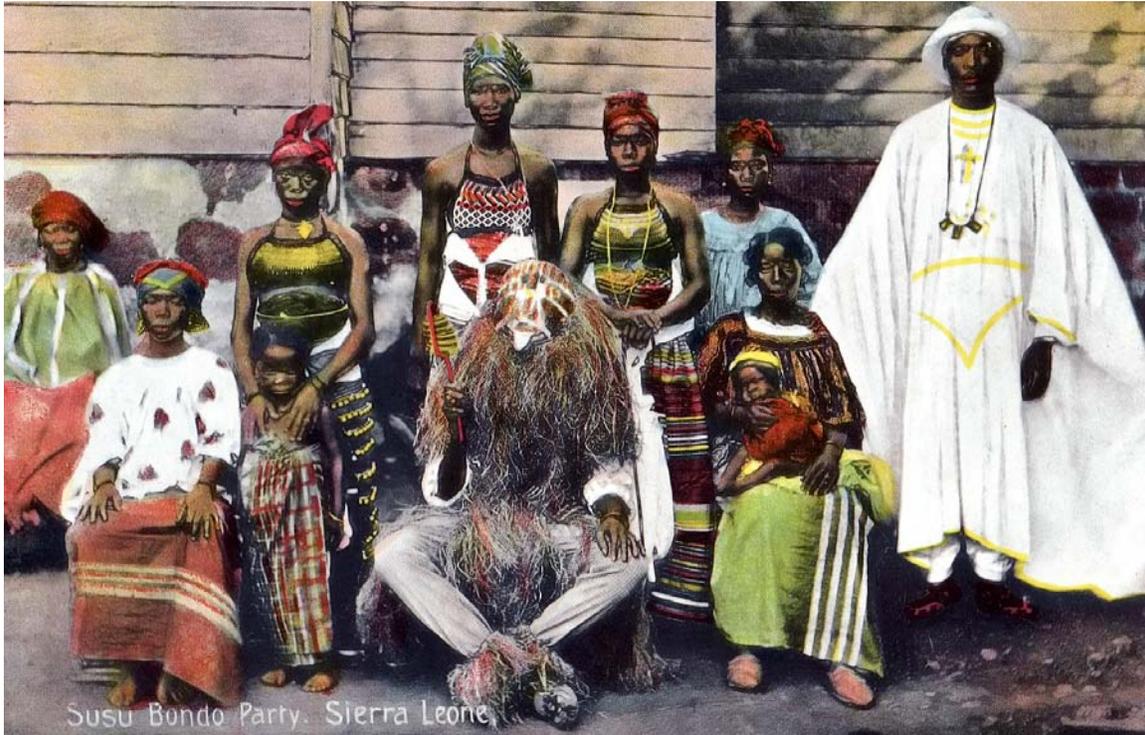


**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



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:

Wednesday, 4 March 2009

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

Wednesday, 4 February 2009

Construction of Pademba Road Magistrate Court begins

By Samuel Ben

Turay

Attorney-general and minister of justice on Monday turned the sod for the construction of the new Pademba road magistrate court, adjacent to the Pademba road prisons, with support from the justice sector development programme (JSDP).

Speakers at the event included the AG Abdul Serry-Kamal, the chief justice Umu Hawa Tejan Jalloh and other personnel and partners of the justice sector in Sierra Leone.

Much of the government infrastructure and equipment within the justice sector was destroyed or in deplorable state during the ten-year rebel war in the country and little or no maintenance is ongoing. JSDP provides access to justice for the poor by addressing prioritised government infrastructure and equipment needs in the justice sector; and has therefore taken on the construction of the magistrate court in the

western area of Freetown.

The new Pademba road magistrate court will reduce the cost in transporting prisoners to and from court, which would contribute to speedy trial, leading to strengthened rule of law and overall improvement in the justice system.

Work on the construction is scheduled to be completed by September this year and would include juvenile courts, with electrical, water and sanitation systems installed.

Maintenance is a key issue in infrastructure; therefore, a system will also be put in place to ensure that the building and equipment provided, undergo regular maintenance, JSDP has said.

Construction of prison officers' quarters for the officer-in-charge, second-in-command and junior officers' quarters in Magburaka, Kambia, Kabala, and the women's prison in Kenema, were completed in 2008. A

prison and prison officers' quarters at Mattru Jong is scheduled to be completed by the end of March this year. Another project is underway to build the Cline Town magistrate Court in the east-end of Freetown.

The infrastructure project is the largest of the 17 projects in the JSDP, with 3 million pounds sterling allocated to provide a range of buildings and equipment across the justice sector, in order to enhance its capacity to provide better services. Priority has been given to providing buildings to improve the capacity of the judiciary and prisons.

This infrastructure intervention of the JSDP is in line with the activities outlined in the justice sector reform strategy and investment plan (JSRSIP) 2008-2010, which aims to develop an efficient, effective, impartial and accountable justice sector that meets the needs of all communities in Sierra Leone. JSDP said.

Des Moines Register

Monday, 2 March 2009

Money needed for Liberian's war crimes trial

By LEE ROOD

lrOOD@dmreg.com

It's harder to get people to donate to good causes these days, even if that cause is international justice.

So Stephen Rapp, the former U.S. attorney for Iowa's Northern District, is struggling as he attempts to raise money for the final stages of the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and his fellow indictees.

Keeping the temporary court afloat financially is a must if the prosecutor is to bring justice to the warlord and alleged sponsor of terror. But it isn't cheap: Proceedings from 2008 to 2010 are expected to cost more than \$68 million.

"It's a little harder now to make the sale," Rapp said in a telephone interview. "International contributions are harder to come by."

One way Rapp raises the court's profile is by keeping a frenetic public-speaking schedule around the globe. This week, he returns to Iowa to give a keynote address Saturday at the 72nd annual Supreme Court banquet sponsored by the Drake University Law School at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Des Moines.

A longtime Iowa prosecutor and former state lawmaker, Rapp is one of a handful of prosecutors heading up war crimes tribunals around the world and the only American.

Rapp has been working on the current case against Taylor and his fellow defendants since 2006. The charismatic dictator is accused of instigating many of the atrocities committed during neighboring Sierra Leone's civil war.

By the time the blood-diamond-fueled conflict ended, thousands of people had been mutilated by rebels, hundreds of children were conscripted into the rebel forces and legions of women had been raped and forced into marriage.

The U.N.-backed tribunal is in the midst of wrapping up the cases against Taylor and a handful of others.

Funding for the immediate future is secure: The United States pays about a third of the tribunal's overall budget. Funding also comes from the British, Canadian and Dutch governments.

But the tribunal needs more money from other countries. Without it, Rapp said, there's a chance Taylor could go free.



On Wednesday, Rapp and other tribunal prosecutors celebrated a major victory: Surviving leaders of the Revolutionary United Front who fought the failed war in Sierra Leone were convicted.

As soon as the spring or as late as summer, Taylor's defense will begin its case. A verdict is expected sometime next year, likely followed by an appeal.

Rapp said he isn't sure what his own future holds. His wife, Dolly, teaches at the University of Northern Iowa, and the couple maintain a house in Cedar Falls.

"I believe very much in this cause, ending atrocities and closing the loopholes and the gaps in this area of international law," he said. "It's a very large challenge."

Winnipeg Free Press

Monday, 2 March 2009

Something, at least

By: Staff Writer

LAST week was a busy one for the international courts of justice. First, the Special Court for Sierra Leone convicted three rebel leaders of crimes against humanity committed in the West African nation during an 11-year civil war.

It is perhaps evidence of how little attention Western governments and the Western public pay to the horrors that happen in obscure corners of the world that it took a Hollywood movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio to bring the issue to the world's attention. *Blood Diamond* dealt with the problem at the root of Sierra Leone's civil war -- its vast diamond wealth.

The lust for those immensely valuable gemstones was the cause of crimes of such enormity that they almost defy the imagination. The amputation of limbs was the favoured practice of the rebel groups, but they also enjoyed mass murder, rape on an epidemic scale as a means of coercion, sexual slavery and the forcible recruitment of child soldiers.

The three leaders who were convicted are the last of those accused in the Sierra Leone atrocities, although clearly there are hundreds, if not thousands of others who could be similarly prosecuted. Their conviction, however, along with five others who were previously tried, means that ringleaders on both sides of this conflict have been brought to justice -- if justice it can be called. There is a grim irony in the truth that the jail cells they will occupy now represent the lap of luxury compared to the lives that their tens of thousands of victims are condemned to live.

But at least something has been done, which is too seldom the case in African conflicts in which civilians are the main victims. Sudan is a case in point. There the government in Khartoum has been conducting a campaign of genocide against the people of the Darfur region, who are black Christians and animists as opposed to the more Arabic Muslims in power.

The International Criminal Court in the Hague is expected to issue a warrant early in March for the arrest of Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, the first time such a warrant has been issued against a sitting head of state. Mr. al-Bashir is also accused of crimes against humanity, orchestrating campaigns of murder, torture and rape in Darfur.

It is unlikely that the warrant will be implemented and the Sudanese president is not about to turn himself in. It may even be that the issuing of the warrant will intensify the very violence it aims to stop. It is a hardly a perfect solution, but in truth there hardly is one of those. At the very least, however, its importance lies in doing something other than sitting aside and cursing the darkness that has enveloped Darfur.

Gulf News

Saturday, 28 February 2009

Justice prevails in war crimes

Conviction of three rebel leaders from Sierra Leone sends a warning to others.

Three rebel leaders from Sierra Leone have been convicted of crimes against humanity and war crimes, committed during the country's civil war, by a United Nations supported special court. During the war, which raged from 1991 to 2002, about 50,000 people were killed by some accounts. The warlords faced charges of mutilation, terrorism, rape, forced marriage, sexual slavery and the enlisting child soldiers.

In The Hague, former Liberian President Charles Taylor is on trial for fomenting Sierra Leone's conflict in exchange for diamonds which he allegedly used to fund his own civil war, among other things. The convictions and ongoing trials are not only important because they serve justice on murderous thugs who disguised their evil and self-interest with flimsy political agendas, but also because they will serve as a warning to any would-be warlord that the international community will eventually act against those that visit death and destruction upon their people.

Frost Illustrated

Tuesday, 3 March 2009

<http://www.frostillustrated.com/full.php?sid=5243>

With court short of funds, Charles Taylor might go free

(GIN)—The global financial crisis has caught up with the U.N.- backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has been prosecuting warlords from the region including former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

The U.N.-backed court, pursuing those held most responsible for atrocities during the country's 1991 to 2002 civil war, faces a budget shortfall of more than \$5 million from May, officials said.

“With the economic crisis continuing, to get funds is not easy... If we run out, it is now possible the judges will have to release him. That's our real anxiety,” Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp told Reuters in a phone interview late on Feb. 23.

Taylor is being tried on 11 counts of crimes against humanity and other charges including rape, enslavement and conscripting child soldiers younger than 15. He has denied the charges.

Boston Globe

Monday, 2 March 2009

Standing up for the slain

By Kevin Cullen

He notices the violence that eats away at places where people look like him, because he is a newsman, and because he lived in Liberia at a time when killings were random, when children had their arms hacked off because they belonged to the wrong tribe.

"I read about those two murder trials," he said, sitting in a Dunkin' Donuts in the shadow of the Tobin Bridge. "Many people saw those two young women murdered, but they did not come forward."

He was talking about Chiara Levin, a victim of testosterone and stupidity, shot as she sat in a car outside a party in Dorchester; and Analicia Perry, gunned down in Roxbury as she knelt at a makeshift shrine to her slain brother.

Because we are so inured to the apathy that murders the inner city, Judge Christine McEvoy said something unbelievable the other day as she shipped Casimiro Barros off to prison for getting Chiara Levin killed, something that was pretty much ignored: as many as 25 people were at the party that spawned the bullets that killed Levin, and only one would talk to the police.

One.

At least Barros got hooked for manslaughter. Laron Richardson, who detectives believe with every fiber of their being is the coward who shot Analicia Perry, beat the rap, because no one would talk to the cops.

Hassan Bility shook his head. He says the Stop Snitchin' mindset has killed as many African-Americans as those who pull the triggers. . He says any community that tolerates gunmen out of fear or apathy is doomed to be held hostage by them.

Seven years ago, Charles Taylor, the Boston-educated former president of Liberia, threw Hassan Bility in prison because Bility had the temerity to print the truth in his newspaper, and the truth was that Charles Taylor tortured and killed people. Taylor's thugs tortured Bility, and there is no doubt they would have killed him if American diplomats and human rights groups hadn't fought for his release. Once free, Bility fled and settled here, walking the same streets Charles Taylor once did, where Taylor's son and protégé Chuckie Taylor was born.

Hassan Bility doesn't forget his friends; he wears an Amnesty International T-shirt under his dress shirt. Neither does he forget his duty to something bigger than himself: justice.

Five years ago, he was called to Sierra Leone, where rebels backed by Taylor ruined a country. He was given the option of testifying behind a screen, but insisted on testifying in public.

In the middle of the trial, his landlord threatened to throw his wife and children out of their apartment in Chelsea because he hadn't paid the rent, rent he couldn't pay because he couldn't work during the four months he spent at the trial. To this day, the United Nations has not reimbursed him for the money he lost.

A few months ago, he went to Miami and testified against Chuckie Taylor, who was sentenced to 97 years for torture. Hassan Bility just returned from The Hague, where he spent six days on the stand, testifying against Charles Taylor.

"Chuckie didn't look at me," he said. "His father looked at me the whole time."

Hassan Bility looks over one shoulder, because there are Taylor loyalists out there who would kill him. On the other shoulder, he feels the hand of a wife who says he has to put his family first. But he cannot say no when called to speak truths.

He thinks of the dead. He thinks of Sister Barbara, the nun who taught him at St. Patrick's School in Monrovia, killed because Charles Taylor believed he could kill anyone.

"There is risk," he says, "but the greater risk is saying nothing."

Hassan Bility is a great man, because he knows there is no greater honor, or responsibility, than speaking for the dead.

Kevin Cullen is a Globe columnist. He can be reached at cullen@globe.com.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
3 March 2009**

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

Newspaper Summary

Leading Women due to Visit Liberia ahead of International Women's Colloquium

(The Informer, National Chronicle, The Independent, The Parrot, Daily Observer)

- German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the President of Finland, Tarja Halonen and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton are among 400 leading women, several of them heads of state, expected at a massive Women's Day meeting this weekend in Liberia.
- Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf announced the gathering on Monday and said she was looking forward to hosting Clinton, Merkel, Chilean President Michelle Bachelet and Finnish President Tarja Halonen among others at the Women International Colloquium slated for March 7 and 8, 2009. Finnish President Tarja Halonen, according to the Daily Observer, is expected, on arrival Friday, to address the 52nd National Legislature of the Republic of Liberia on the same day. Presidents Halonen and Sirleaf are both co-conveners of the International Women Colloquium and will hold bilateral discussions ahead of the meeting.
- The gathering which will also be attended by Nelson Mandela's wife Graca Machel, will focus on the future of women in the world, according to a statement from the Liberian presidency.

Two Human Rights Groups Alarm over 'Illegal' Logging in Bassa

(The News, Daily Observer)

- Two authoritative human rights and pro-democracy groups, Sustainable Development Institute and the Environmental Lawyers of Liberia (Green Advocates) have disclosed that Tarpeh Timber has begun illegal logging in Grand Bassa County. Sustainable Development Institute and the Association of Environmental Lawyers of Liberia (Green Advocates) recently visited Grand Bassa and found overwhelming evidence that Tarpeh Timber has begun felling trees in violation of the forestry law, the FDA's regulations and the environmental law of Liberia.

Monrovia's Largest Food Market Plays Host to 'Criminal Gangs'

(Daily Observer)

- [sic:] Red-light General Market in Paynesville described by residents and traders as Monrovia's biggest food market now plays host to dozens of criminals who take refuge in containers, eluding the attention of security agencies in the greater Monrovia area. In two separate weekend investigations by this reporter, several containers were spotted with suspected criminals carrying out all kinds of illicit activities, ranging from the open smoking of narcotic substances and seizing valuables from business people and residents.

Poverty Spreads in Liberia – UNMIL Human Rights Chief Unveils Statistics

(Daily Observer)

- [sic:] The huge gathering of predominately youth and students was effectively overwhelmed by silence and shock when they were told that 51% of Liberia's 3.6 million people live under 50 cents a day. Quoting the country's development statistics, Mr. Eugene Nindorera of the Human Rights and Protection Section of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) pointed out that life expectancy in the country was 45 years. He put infant mortality and under-five mortality at 72 for every 1,000 live births and 111 in every 1,000 live births.

Brumskine Urges President Sirleaf to Intervene to Avoid Mass Deportation of Liberians from US

(The Inquirer)

- The Liberty Party of Cllr. Charles Brumskine has warned that any forced departure of Liberians from the United States will have a devastating effect. A statement issued from the office of Cllr. Brumskine maintained that Liberia, as a post-conflict society, is still struggling to resettle hundreds of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).
- According to the statement, Liberia's social, political, economic and security infrastructures are currently unable to handle the needs of additional repatriates.
- The Liberty Party former flag-bearer further argued that Liberians in the United States play a vital role in the economic rehabilitation of the post-war country. Cllr. Brumskine said millions of dollars remitted to relatives each year will have a multiplier effect on the country were the Liberians to be deported. He believes without these remittances, violent crimes would increase over the already unacceptable levels threatening the socio-economic fabric of the country. The Liberty Party statement called on President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to take the lead in lobbying the U.S. Government to resolve the immigration plight of these refugees.

NEC Certificates Winner of River Gee Run-Off Election

(The News)

- The National Elections Commission has certificated the winner of the just-ended River Gee run-off Senatorial by-election. Senator Nathaniel Williams received the certificate as a symbol of authority given him by the people of River Gee County to serve as their second senator. Senator Williams in response, promised to justify the confidence reposed in him by living up to the expectation of the people. According to the River Gee Senator, he would assist in soliciting assistance from domestic and international sources for his county and Liberia.
- Senator Williams also denied ever accusing the Chairman of NEC of being in the convoy of the defeated UP candidate Ambassador Conmany Wesseh.

Radio Summary

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

Senators "Poise" to Remove Nyenabo As Pro-Temp

- Reports say Grand Gedeh County Senator, Isaac Nyenabo could be ousted as Senate Pro-tempore of the Liberian Senate today.
- Over the past few weeks, intense pressure has been mounted by key members of the majority bloc of the Liberian Senate for the resignation of Pro-temp Nyenabo.
- The pressure comes amidst allegations linking him to alleged dubious practices including academic fraud, misuse of public funds and lack of integrity.
- A group of four Senators last week threatened what they called an "acrimonious" assault on him if he does not immediately resign his post.

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

Senator Taylor Alarms Over Killings in Bong County

- Bong County Senator Jewel Howard Taylor has described as alarming the constant wave of killing innocent people in the county.
- Senator Taylor said it was unacceptable for evil people to launch a new form of war on the

people of Bong County.

- The Senator's statement is in response to the recent killing of a commercial motorcyclist in Gbarnga which led to a violent protest resulting into the burning of the Police Depot in the area.
- Meanwhile, Methodist Bishop, John Innis has condemned the killing and called for the suspects to be brought to justice.

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

Liberian Lawyer Appears in Court on Fraud Charges

- A Liberian lawyer, Attorney Syrenius Cephus appeared in court today on fraud and theft charges.
- Attorney Cephus' appearance comes days after it was reported that he was running away from justice but he dismissed the reports as lies concocted by his critics.
- Attorney Cephus and four others were accused of duping a Gambian businessman, Lasana Tambajang of US\$1.2 million.

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

Truth F.M. *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*

Government Negotiators Justify Signing of China Union Mining Agreement

- Speaking during public hearings yesterday, the Liberian Government team of negotiators on the China Union Mining Concession Agreement has justified reasons for the agreement to be ratified by the National Legislature.
- The team said the agreement seeks to buttress government's revenue generation and provide job opportunities for Liberians.

Massive "Recruitment" of Liberians to Serve In Iraq Underway

- [SIC]Truth F.M. reports that it has uncovered a massive recruitment drive of Liberians to take up military assignment in Iraq.
- According to the station, hundreds of Liberians most of them ex-combatants have been filing in documents required for recruitment.
- The man charged to carry out the recruitment, John Mannie said he was fronting for a London-based company to recruit 250 Liberians for the mission.
- Meanwhile, Information Minister, Laurence Bropleh said Government was investigating the situation.

Associated Press

Tuesday, 3 February 2009

Prosecutor: Strong case against Sudanese leader

By MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The International Criminal Court announces Wednesday whether it will issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on charges of masterminding genocide in Darfur — a move that could provoke a violent backlash.

The chief prosecutor says dozens of witnesses will testify that al-Bashir controlled a genocidal campaign aimed at wiping out three ethnic African tribes in the vast nation south of Egypt.

"We have strong evidence against Mr. Bashir," prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo said Tuesday. "More than 30 witnesses will (testify) how he managed to control everything and we have strong evidence of his intention. I never present a case without strong evidence."

An arrest warrant for al-Bashir would be a milestone for the world's first permanent war crimes tribunal, which started work in 2002 and has never before ordered the arrest of a sitting head of state.

It would also put him alongside the likes of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and Liberian leader Charles Taylor as heads of state indicted for war crimes while in office. Both of them were forced from power and ended up on trial at international tribunals in The Hague, as did former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic who was arrested last year after 13 years as a fugitive.

In a show of defiance Tuesday, al-Bashir danced for cheering supporters at a rally in northern Sudan where an effigy of Moreno Ocampo was gleefully torched.

"They will issue their decision tomorrow, and we are telling them to immerse it in water and drink it," al-Bashir said, using a common Arabic insult meant to show extreme disrespect.

The war in Darfur began in 2003, when rebel groups took up arms against the government complaining of discrimination and neglect. U.N. officials say up to 300,000 people have died and 2.7 million have fled their homes.

The Security Council asked Moreno Ocampo to investigate crimes in Darfur in 2005.

Moreno Ocampo has asked for arrest warrants on 10 charges including genocide, murder, torture, persecution and rape. He said Sudanese troops and the Janjaweed Arab militia they support murdered civilians and continued to prey on them even in refugee camps. He says the militia supported by al-Bashir's government also uses a systematic campaign of rape to drive women into the desert where they die of starvation.

If the warrant is issued, questions still remain over who will arrest al-Bashir, who seized power in a coup nearly 20 years ago.

Sudanese authorities refuse to turn over suspects, the court has no police force and thousands of U.N. and African Union peacekeepers protecting civilians in Darfur and a safeguarding fragile peace in Sudan's semiautonomous south are not mandated to detain him.

Rebels currently engaged in peace talks with al-Bashir's government say they are prepared to arrest him and said a warrant would be a victory for Darfur.

"We are ready even to arrest al-Bashir. As a movement we are strong enough," Suleiman Sandal, chief commander for the rebel group Justice and Equality Movement, said in a satellite phone interview.

Legal experts say the three-judge panel that has analyzed hundreds of pages of evidence is likely to issue a warrant on some, if not all of the charges.

"I would expect the court to issue arrest warrants," said Andre Nollkaemper, a professor of international law at Amsterdam University.

Moreno Ocampo said judges acknowledged the Khartoum government's involvement in Darfur atrocities when they issued warrants for Cabinet minister Ahmed Harun in 2007. Wednesday's decision "is about the responsibility of Mr. Bashir," he added.

He alleges the president mobilized Sudan's military and Arab militias in a campaign of murder, rape and forced displacement of the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa African tribes in Darfur.

"The intention was to exterminate three ethnic groups and that is why it is genocide," he told reporters at the court's headquarters in The Hague.

Moreno Ocampo also said Sudanese agents had offered prominent Darfur refugees money to speak out against the court or claim they lied to investigators. He did not elaborate but said al-Bashir's agents were trying "to undermine our credibility in this way."

A top U.N. official said this week peacekeepers are prepared for a violent reaction if any warrants are issued.

"I'm sure there will be some crowd movements. There will be some violence," U.N. peacekeeping chief Alain Le Roy said.