

**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:

Monday, 22 June 2009

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

Thursday, 18 June 2009

Liberia: Date Set for Former President Charles Taylor's Defence At UN-Backed Trial

The United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone today announced that lawyers for the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, will begin their defence against charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity on 13 July.

Mr. Taylor's lawyers will make their opening arguments on that day in The Hague, where the Court is based, and the preparatory hearing is slated for 6 July. In 2006, the Security Council authorized the trial to be held in the Netherlands, instead of its usual venue in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, citing security reasons.

The Prosecution rested its case against Mr. Taylor in February after presenting 91 witnesses to provide testimony.

The former President has pleaded not guilty to the 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, which include pillage, slavery for forced marriage purposes, collective punishment, and the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

The charges relate to his alleged support for two rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and the Revolutionary United Front, during that country's civil war from 1996 to 2002.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was established in January 2002 through an agreement between Sierra Leone's Government and the UN. It cannot impose a life sentence, but it has already sentenced two defendants in another case to 50 years in jail. Britain has said it would be willing to imprison Mr. Taylor if he is found guilty.

Star Radio

Saturday, 20 June 2009

TRC delegates want prosecution for perpetrators of conflict

Written by Robert J. Clarke, Jr.

Delegates at the just ended National Reconciliation Conference have recommended prosecution for perpetrators of the civil conflict.

The delegates in their 38-count resolution also called for the denial of perpetrators to elected or appointed positions.

They want monuments and multi-purpose halls built at massacre sites in honor of those who were killed in the civil war.

The over four hundred participants called for the change of the motto on the Liberian seal from the Love of Liberty Brought Us Here to the Love of Liberty Unites Us Here.

They also proposed that a palm tree be used as a national symbol.

At the sametime the delegates recommended a review of the constitution and the rewriting of Liberia's history.

The 38-count resolution further wants a decrease in the number of political parties in the country and the election of county superintendents.

Receiving the participants' resolution, TRC Chairman Jerome Verdier thanked the delegates and promised to place the recommendations in the Commission's final report.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**
 United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 19 June 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

International Clips on West Africa

Local Media – Newspaper

Police Questioned over Budgetary Allotment for Vehicles

(The Inquire, Heritage, The News)

- Police authorities in Monrovia have been questioned over the expenditure of funds allotted in the 2008/09 budget for the purchase of vehicles.
- The Joint Legislative Budget Committee raised concern over the use of the money which is in the tone of US\$450,000.
- The money was allotted to buy one vehicle for each of the fifteen Counties for use by the Police.
- Responding to the inquiries of the Legislature, Deputy Police Director Asatu Bah-Kenneth said the money was used for the purchased of vehicles and was dispatched to all of the Counties.
- However, a member of the budget committee Senator Adolphus Dolo of Nimba County disputed the account of the Police saying there were no regional vehicles in some areas including Margibi County.
- Meanwhile, the budget committee has resolved to meet police and Justice Ministry authorities in a secret session on some controversial issues.

Government, Partners Sign US\$400,000 Agriculture Project

(National Chronicle, Daily Observer)

- Government and its partners have signed nearly half a million US Dollars project for the establishment of the Centre Shanghai Initiative.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Country Director to Liberia, Dr. Winfred Harmon said the centre would stimulate rural development through agriculture based businesses.
- Dr. Harmon said the beneficiaries who are mostly youths would be able to transform agriculture products into other produce for use.
- He said a big centre has already been built in Bensonville with satellite centres in some counties to initiate the project.
- Acting Agriculture Minister Lorpu Kandakai who signed on behalf of government thanked the partners for the project and promised government's full cooperation.

Police Officers Storm Central Bank in Demand of Delayed Salaries

(Daily Observer)

- The Daily Observer reports that several police officers yesterday stormed the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) over delayed salaries.
- Reports say since the end of last month, some officers received their checks only last week while other received their pay some three days ago.
- Some personnel of the LNP who preferred anonymity said they were getting frustrated with the system of payment saying they were not happy with the situation.

Police Launches Manhunt for 'Black Cat'

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer)

- The Liberia National Police (LNP) has arrested four armed robbers in the Barnesville, suburb of Monrovia.
- According to police authorities, the robbers raided several homes during the robbery and raped a 16-year old girl in the process.
- Those arrested are Anthony Porka, Lolloh Seaygeh, Wehse Damilia and Amos Johnny.
- Two other notorious suspects identified as “Black Cat” and Marcus Niki Black are reportedly on the run.

28 'Illegal Health Institutions' Ordered Closed

(Daily Observer)

- The Government, through the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) at the Ministry of Education (MOE), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOH/SW), yesterday ordered the closure of over 28 health institutions that are 'illegally' operating across the country.

Senator Lansanah to Face Police Questioning over Guthrie “Shooting”

(The Informer)

- The Senior Senator of Bomi County, Hon. Lahai G. Lansanah is to shortly appear before a Police Panel of investigators to comment on his alleged role in the fatal shoot-out at the Guthrie Rubber Plantation in Bomi and Cape Mount Counties early this year.
- Three persons were wounded in the shoot-out.
- Information Minister, Dr. Lawrence K. Bropleh said the committee set up by President Sirleaf to investigate the Guthrie shoot-out resolved to invite the Senator for questioning over the incident.
- It can be recalled that early this year workers at the Guthrie Rubber staged a violent demonstration in demand of three months salary arrears allegedly owed them by the Guthrie Plantation Interim Management Team.

Local Media – Star Radio (*News monitored today at 09:00 am*)

Another Error Discovered in 2009/2010 Draft budget

- The joint legislative budget committee has discovered another error in the 2009/2010 draft fiscal budget.
- The error was found in the proposed budget of the Justice Ministry with emphasis on the Police and Corrections Palace.
- It was discovered that the salary of newly recruited correction officers and other personnel was placed under the draft budget of the Police.
- The placement meant there were two budgets for salary payment of newly recruited correction officers and other personnel.
- One of the salary payments was placed under the Police while the other was placed under the Bureau of Corrections.

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

Government to Take over AFL Training Command Early Next Year

- Government has revealed it would formally take over the training command of the Armed Forces of Liberia from its international partners as of January 2010.
- The statement followed a meeting between Defense Minister Brownie Samukai and Egyptian Ambassador to Liberia Ahmed Yakoub.
- Minister Samukai encouraged Liberia’s international partners to give more support to the country saying such support was necessary to help Liberia meet its training needs for senior and junior officers of the AFL.
- He said government was looking up to ECOWAS, the African Union, EU and members of the Defense Support Group to enhance Liberia’s training needs.
- Meanwhile, Minister Samukai has thanked the United States Government for increasing training slots to the Armed Forces of Liberia.

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

Murder’ Suspect Set Free in Harper

- Reports from Maryland County say the Justice Ministry has ordered the release of Edward Wilson, the man at the centre of the violence in Harper.

- Several residents of Harper engaged in a violent protest last week, on suspicion that Wilson killed one Thomas Davies for ritualistic purposes.
- But government says an autopsy conducted shows that Thomas died from natural causes and could not detained Wilson further.
- Our correspondent also spoke of the release on bail of seven of fourteen young people taken to court for the disturbance in Harper.
- According to the reports, government has also reduced the curfew imposed in the County by two the hours. The curfew now runs from dusk to dawn.

Court Denies Change of Venue for Trial of Twenty-Three Motorcyclists

- The 9th Judicial Circuit Court in Bong County has denied a motion for change of venue in the case involving twenty-three motorcyclists allegedly involved in the February 27 violent demonstration in Gbarnga following the death of a colleague.
- The court argued that the prosecution failed to provide sufficient reasons to warrant a change of venue.
- Despite the denial of the motion, no specific time has been set for the trial of the case.

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Institute for War and Peace Reporting

Monday, 22 June 2009

ICTY - Tribunal Update

Courtside

Another No Show for Staniscic

Proceedings against Serbian police officials postponed again due to suspect's poor health.

By Simon Jennings in The Hague

The war crimes trial of two former Serbian police officials has been further delayed after one of the defendants, who suffers from several long-term illnesses, once more failed to attend court.

Jovica Staniscic and Franko Simatovic are charged at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY, for responsibility for crimes, including murder, persecution, forced deportation and other inhumane acts.

Staniscic was head of the Serbian State Security, DB, between December 1991 and October 1998. Simatovic, also known as "Frenki", was the commander of the DB's special operations unit between 1991 and 1995.

According to the prosecution's indictment, they are responsible for "the forcible and permanent removal of the majority of non-Serbs, principally Croats, Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats from large areas of Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina".

Prosecutors allege that the two defendants provided logistical support for Serb paramilitary units – including Arkan's Tigers, the Red Berets, the Scorpions and Martić's militia – which committed crimes against non-Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia.

Staniscic and Simatovic have both pleaded not guilty to all charges against them.

The trial began on April 28 last year, but was suspended only two weeks later, on May 16, due to Staniscic's poor health.

The defendant, who was suffering from osteoporosis, kidney stones, pouchitis and depression, was unable to attend court hearings or watch proceedings via a video link set up for him at the United Nations prison in The Hague where he was in custody. He had refused to give up his right to be present during trial hearings.

Staniscic was then granted provisional release from the UN detention unit on May 26, 2008, to allow him to receive medical attention and recuperate in Serbia.

Following treatment in Belgrade, Staniscic returned to The Hague last week as judges sought to restart the trial.

On the basis of medical reports from his doctors in Belgrade, judges had scheduled for the trial to start again on May 25, ruling that the defendant was able to participate in the proceedings.

However, as so often happened in the run up his trial last year, Staniscic again failed to attend a meeting between the parties in court this week.

"We were informed that Staniscic has claimed that he is too unwell to attend court or be present in a video link room [at the UN detention unit]," Dutch judge, Alphons Orie, told the parties on May 12.

According to Judge Orie, the reporting medical officer at the UN detention unit, Dr Michael Eekhof, had written to the judges informing them that Staniscic was not too ill to come to the proceedings.

Eekhof's letter explained that the defendant had visited a gastroenterologist and had undergone an MRI scan the previous day and was going to see a neurologist later this week. Eekhof had not mentioned the defendant's capacity to use the video link from the prison, said the judge.

According to Stanasic himself, he "cannot stand or walk for more than a few moments", said Judge Orie.

Medical reports say his psychological condition has deteriorated and he now suffers from a herniated disc in his lower spine, said the judge.

Judge Orie informed the parties that he had also spoken with Dr Paulus Falke, the doctor who treats inmates at the UN prison, who had told him that he could not exclude the possibility that Stanasic was exaggerating his health problems in light of his pending trial.

Before this week's hearing, Stanasic's lawyers had asked for the restart of the trial to be delayed by four weeks due to their prior commitments in other cases before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Judge Orie said the chamber would make a decision on their request but regardless of their concern, pushed back the start date of the trial by two weeks "for a variety of reasons". A pre-trial conference will now be held on June 2.

The judge also addressed administrative matters relating to the trial's suspension for over a year.

He sought to clarify notice given by the judges' order that evidence already entered would have to be reproduced before the court.

The prosecution had made its opening statement and presented one witness to the court before the trial was suspended.

"Witnesses heard or exhibits admitted at the initial commencement of trial proceedings in this case shall not be considered as evidence without presentation anew following recommencement of trial," confirmed Judge Orie from the order given by judges.

"Everything that happened after the start of the trial is more or less annulled, doesn't count and therefore has to be repeated.

"This does not affect any rulings that have been completed before the trial started."

Judge Orie confirmed that Stanasic would not be granted further provisional release between the hearing and the scheduled start of the trial.

Only if further delays arose due to Stanasic's ailments would judges then consider granting provisional release, he said.

While the court adjourned until June 2, Orie noted that further meetings between the parties might be necessary before then to discuss Stanasic's poor health.

Simon Jennings is an IWPR reporter in The Hague.

Sudan Watch

Wednesday, 17 June 2009

Paul Moorcraft says ICC Bashir arrest warrant will undermine Sudan's CPA, peace must come before justice

Paul Moorcraft says the ICC Bashir arrest warrant will undermine Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Peace must come before justice. The Doha talks between JEM and NCP were about to succeed but were more or less sabotaged by the ICC's decision to issue an arrest warrant.

As debate over the arrest warrant issued against President al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court continues, a foreign political analyst thinks that the warrant will undermine the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The Director of the UK-based Centre for Foreign Policy Analysis, Professor Paul Moorcraft, told Sudan Radio Service on Tuesday that peace must come before justice because arresting Bashir at this time will destroy the CPA as well as complicate the peace process in Darfur. He added that both parties have committed atrocities in the region.

[Professor Paul Moorcraft]: "I don't particularly like President al-Bashir but my main argument is that the ICC arrest warrant is more likely to end up ensuring that al-Bashir stays in power for life. But it also puts pressure on the CPA. You could argue that the president says he is innocent, well, he should go to The Hague, but we know he is unlikely to do that. There is no doubt that a lot of atrocities were committed by the Sudanese Army in Darfur, just as today, the JEM and the rebel elements of the SLA are also committing awful atrocities, especially against workers in the NGOs who are trying to feed the Darfur people. So, yes there are crimes on both sides but at the moment what am saying is in short, peace must come before justice. It is great to have both and maybe they will come in time, but what matters is bringing peace to Darfur, end the suffering and not to undermine the north-south agreement and that's what I fear the ICC will bring. Peace before justice.

Professor Moorcraft also doubts that an African Union court would resolve the Darfur conflict.

[Professor Paul Moorcraft]: "Africa doesn't have a good record, the African Union is full of dictatorships, but there is no simple solution. As long as African states are badly governed there will be no easy solution to get rid of presidents-for-life".

He said that the imposition of European standards in solving African issues can be disastrous, adding that only a political solution can end the Darfur conflict.

[Professor Paul Moorcraft]: "I think sometimes when there is western intervention it can cause negative consequences in Africa. So, political investment is good, political investment like in Naivasha, repeating itself in Darfur. But I have doubts about the intent to impose European standards. Remember, very few - only 27 percent - of the world has signed up to the ICC. it is not an International Court of Justice, many countries have not joined and at the moment virtually all those who have been indicted have been African leaders, it seems to me that that smacks a little of colonialism."

Professor Moorcraft added that the Doha talks between the Justice and Equality Movement and the National Congress Party were about to succeed but that they were more or less sabotaged by the ICC decision to issue President al-Bashir with an arrest warrant.

UN News

Thursday, 18 June 2009

ICC confirms charges against former DR Congo leader

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has confirmed charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity against former Congolese vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo for acts committed in the Central African Republic (CAR).

In the decision announced yesterday, judges in The Hague-based ICC found that Mr. Bemba had the “necessary criminal intent” when in 2002 he ordered his armed group, the Mouvement de libération du Congo (MLC), into CAR to back up embattled leader Ange-Félix Patassé.

According to the ICC, MLC fighters committed war crimes and crimes against humanity on that mission, with Bemba “effectively acting as military commander.” His alleged responsibility covers crimes committed between October 2002 and March 2003.

The alleged crimes include rape, murder and pillaging. Torture was among the crimes the Court did not uphold, citing a lack of evidence.

Mr. Bemba was arrested in May 2008 by Belgian authorities and transferred to the ICC in July.

He is to stand trial at a date still to be determined.

The situation in CAR is one of four – along with Darfur, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda – currently under investigation by the Prosecutor of the ICC, an independent, permanent court that tries persons accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Sudanese Media Centre

Thursday, 18 June 2009

Speaker of Malaysian Parliament Affirms his Country's Support to Sudan concerning ICC Allegations

The Speaker of the Malaysian Parliament, Amin Haj Mulia, has affirmed his country's full support to Sudan concerning the allegations of the so-called International Criminal Court (ICC). He expressed the affirmation when he received Wednesday Sudan Ambassador to Malaysia, Nader Yousif Al-Tayeb.

The Speaker of the Malaysian Parliament said that claims of the ICC against President Al-Bashir are false and politically motivated. He praised the strong support being accorded by the Sudanese people to their President. Meanwhile, Ambassador Al-Tayeb expressed Sudan praise over the firm support of Malaysia to Sudan at all domains.

The Malaysian Parliament's Speaker and Ambassador Al-Tayeb discussed progress of the distinguished relations between Sudan and Malaysia. Ambassador Al-Tayeb said that Sudan is regarding Malaysia as a strategic partner, referring to the cooperation between the two countries in the petroleum, gas, education and capacity building fields.

The East African

Monday, 22 June 2009

<http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/opOrEd/comment/-/434750/613426/-/ammkwt/-/>

Why our past can still kill us

By L. Muthoni Wanyeki

As the country waits for our long-awaited Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission to be approved by the president and gazetted, important steps towards transitional justice are quietly being addressed elsewhere.

One of the big debates around the TJRC was how long back it would go. In the end, we settled for the period from Independence to the signing of the national accord last year.

So this does not lock out veterans of Mau Mau and other anti-colonial movements, it was agreed that the TJRC would cover their post-Independence grievances.

The National Rainbow Coalition, on coming into power in 2002, finally unbanned the Mau Mau — enabling its members to organise openly, almost 40 years after the Union Jack was lowered and the flag of the independent Republic of Kenya raised for the first time.

The government, through the National Museums of Kenya, also began a process of official recognition of our freedom fighters through the network of community museums across the country.

Prime Minister Raila Odinga has committed to a Cabinet discussion of the welfare needs and other demands of the The Mau Mau War Veterans Association.

AT THE COAST, THERE ARE NOW Annual celebrations in honour of Me Katilili wa Menza, the Giriama prophet who led her people against the advent of the British in Kenya.

In the Rift Valley, a foundation honours Koitalel arap Samoei, the Nandi leader who led his people against the British incursions.

What all these efforts have achieved is to place the contentious issues of history squarely before generations that grew up being taught next to nothing about how our independence was actually achieved.

It was achieved in many ways: by the cultural/religious resistance exemplified by Me Katiliti wa Menza and Elijah wa Masinde of Dini ya Msambwa; by the labour resistance exemplified by Makhan Singh; by the political resistance exemplified by the political parties; by the popular resistance exemplified by Mary Wanjiru (who led the protest against the arrest of Harry Thuku of the Gikuyu Central Association and was one of the first to be shot down outside of the Norfolk Hotel); and by the armed resistance of the Mau Mau.

Kenyans from all walks of life and across the country stood up so that we could be free.

But the version of history taught to us was sanitised — sweeping crucial issues under the carpet so as to “forgive without forgetting.” It was one-sided history, contributing to much of the feelings of ethnic and racial exclusion today.

Voice of America

Sunday, 21 June 2009

Rights Report: Zimbabwe Abuses Could Constitute Crimes Against Humanity

By Scott Bobb
Johannesburg

A study by human rights groups in southern Africa say torture and other abuses in Zimbabwe have been so widespread and systematic that they could be considered crimes against humanity. And it says these abuses continue, causing a major blemish on the four month-old power-sharing government.

The director of the Harare-based Research and Advocacy Unit, Tony Reeler, says a review of investigations by numerous rights groups shows that torture and gross human rights violations in Zimbabwe have been perpetrated for decades on what he calls an epidemic scale.

He says the abuses have been widespread and systematic which fulfills a definition of crimes against humanity.

He adds that victims have identified senior Zimbabwean officials as being behind the violence. And they have testified that torture centers were set up in government-owned buildings such as schools and clinics.

He says this indicates that, at the very least, the state condoned the abuse. "You can be accused of crimes against humanity in two ways. One is that you are actively involved in the commission of those things. The second is that you do not take active steps to prevent it. Omission is also very important," he said.

Reeler's report was based on investigations by more than one dozen human rights groups which, he says, used different methods but came to the same basic conclusions.

His report says human rights abuses occurred for decades in Zimbabwe but that they worsened after the year 2000 and peaked during the disputed elections last year.

In these elections, the former-opposition Movement for Democratic Change defeated President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party in the parliamentary vote.

In the presidential vote, Mr. Mugabe came in second to MDC leader Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai but he won the run-off election after Mr. Tsvangirai withdrew citing violence against his supporters.

Mr. Mugabe's government vehemently denies the reports of human rights abuses saying they are lies aimed at de-stabilizing the regime. It notes that some ZANU-PF supporters have also been victimized.

Reeler says that in addition to torture, beatings and intimidation, a new form of abuse has emerged. "Some of the reports have made this point, that there is a new kind of violation floating around. And this is a kind of psychological torture. What you do is you smash their home. You steal their goods. You eat their cattle and their goats and you impoverish them. That's a way of keeping people compliant," he said.

Reeler's report says the abuses have declined since the power sharing government was installed with Mr. Mugabe as president and Mr. Tsvangirai as prime minister. But he says the abuses continue and that is a major blot (stain) on the new government.

Dozens of MDC and human rights activists have been arrested in recent months on charges of plotting to overthrow the state. Many of them have been released on bail but others remain missing.

The head of Amnesty International (Irene Khan) Friday was heavily criticized in the state controlled media after she said, during a visit to the country, that human rights violations continue in Zimbabwe.

A researcher with South Africa's Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Glen Mpani, said a major impediment to peace and reconciliation is the culture of impunity that has evolved. "Zimbabwe has gone through processes of announcing national union and reconciliation in the past and these processes have all been geared towards providing impunity and allowing perpetrators to go scot-free," he said.

Reeler says peace can only be brought about by placing security structures under complete civilian control. Reconciliation can only come by creating mechanisms for healing. And healing can only come about through justice.