

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



Visitors watching the opening of the Charles Taylor defence case this morning

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, 13 July 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

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The Nation
Monday, 13 July 2009

Taylor Trial Opens Today

The defense in the trial of the former Liberian president Charles Taylor standing trial before the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague for war crimes against hu-

manity is scheduled to open its case today. Taylor, who was president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003, is expected to be the first defense witness and to take the stand on

Tuesday, July 14. He is being tried on 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed during Sierra Leone's 11-year armed conflict, which ended in 2002. The

charges are primarily for his alleged role as a major backer of the Sierra Leone rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and his alleged association with a second warring faction, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Coun

The Nation
Monday, 13 July 2009

LRA Warrants Extend to Four Years

LRA Warrants Ex- tend To Four Years

From The Hague, Netherlands, the International Criminal Court. ICC's arrest warrant number CPI-20090708-PR434 issued on Wednesday 8 July 2005 against Joseph Kony and other senior Lord Resistance Army, LRA commanders including Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen for crimes against humanity and war crimes they are suspected to have committed between 2002 and 2004

have been extended to another four years. The men are alleged to have abducted children and transformed them into soldiers and sexual slaves. Since the warrants were issued, it's four years ago, the fugitives still remain at large. Therefore the ICC has welcomed states co-operation in the effort to apprehend the LRA fugitives. It takes encouragement from the fact that the governments of the



region are now acting together with the support of MONUC to address the issue of arresting LRA suspects. The Court remains hopeful that continued concerted efforts will lead to the enforcement of the warrants.

Source: ICC

Radovan Karadzic Accuses US of Betrayal

Claiming to have been betrayed by the United States, the United Nations war crimes tribunal for the 1990s Balkan conflicts has rejected an application by the former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic that he should be granted immunity from prosecution because he signed an agreement with the United States Government in 1996. The three judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), sitting in The Hague, denied the claim, a motion challenged by lawyers for Mr. Karadzic, who said that their client has not been able to establish the act has been an abuse of process. Reports say Mr. Karadzic says that he reached a deal with US representatives, led by its official negotiator in the conflict Richard



Holbrooke that he would be immune from any subsequent war crimes prosecution if he gave up politics and withdrew from public life in mid-1996. When interviewed, Mr. Holbrooke is reported to have denied making such agreement with Mr. Karadzic. But the ICTY agreed with prosecutors that Mr. Karadzic could not show that any such agreement was arranged under the authority of the Security Council, which set up the tribunal to

handle the cases of the worst atrocities committed during the Balkan wars. After more than a decade as a fugitive, the former leader of the Republic of Serbia and commander of Bosnian Serb forces during part of the 1990s, Mr. Karadzic was arrested a year ago and transferred to The Hague to stand trial on charges of genocide, complicity in genocide, extermination, murder, wilful killing, persecutions, deportations, inhumane acts and other crimes.

The Spark

Monday, 13 July 2009

Defense Opens Taylor War Crimes Trial



The defense in the trial of the former Liberian president Charles Taylor before the Special Court for Sierra Leone is scheduled to open its case on July 13, 2009 in The Hague. Taylor, who was president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003, is expected to be the first defense witness and to take the stand on July 14.

Taylor is being tried on 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international law committed during Sierra Leone's brutal 11-year armed conflict, which ended in 2002. The charges are primarily for

his alleged role as a major backer of the Sierra Leone rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and his alleged association with a second warring faction, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The RUF in particu-

lar was notorious for its atrocities, including cutting off the limbs of civilians.

"Charles Taylor's trial gives

victims of heinous abuses in Sierra Leone an important opportunity to see justice done,"

Continued page 7

Defense Opens Taylor War Crimes Trial

From front page

said Elise Keppler, senior counsel with Human Rights Watch's International Justice Program. "A vigorous defense is key to ensuring a fair, credible trial."

Taylor is being tried by the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, a hybrid international-national court that includes Sierra Leonean and international judges and staff. While the Special Court is headquartered in Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital, Taylor's trial is taking place at the facilities of the International Criminal Court in The Hague because of concerns that a trial in Sierra Leone might

affect stability in West Africa.

Taylor's testimony is expected to last for several weeks. Prior to Taylor's arrest in 2006, Human Rights Watch worked with a coalition of African and international nongovernmental organizations to press for his surrender for trial and has closely followed the work of the Special Court since it was established in 2002.

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on Sierra Leone, including on the trial of Charles Taylor and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, please visit the following:

Associated Press
Monday, 13 July 2009

Charles Taylor begins his war crimes defense

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Charles Taylor has begun his defense against charges he led rebels in Sierra Leone who murdered, raped and mutilated villagers.

The former Liberian president's lawyer has urged judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone not to let the horrors inflicted by rebels during the country's civil war cloud their judgment about Taylor's involvement in the crimes.

Taylor is charged with 11 crimes including murder, torture, rape, sexual slavery, using child soldiers and spreading terror.

Courtenay Griffiths said Monday he was in court "to defend a man who we say is innocent of these charges."

Taylor is the first African head of state to be tried by an international court. He is to take the stand in his own defense Tuesday.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Charles Taylor begins his defense Monday against charges he led rebels in Sierra Leone who murdered, raped and mutilated villagers in a brutal terror campaign during the country's civil war.

The former Liberian president is accused of commanding and arming the rebels from his presidential palace in Monrovia.

Taylor, the first African head of state to be tried by an international court, has pleaded not guilty to 11 charges including murder, torture, rape, sexual slavery, using child soldiers and spreading terror.

Prosecutors at the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone have called 91 witnesses since January 2007. Now it is Taylor's turn.

"His case is that he was not involved," Taylor's British lawyer Courtenay Griffiths told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "That he was a peacemaker, not a warmonger."

Griffiths will deliver his opening statement Monday and the former president will take the stand Tuesday for what is expected to be weeks of testimony in his own defense.

Taylor was forced into exile after being indicted in 2003 and was finally arrested in Nigeria three years later. He was sent for trial in The Hague in June 2006 because officials feared staging the case in Sierra Leone could spark further violence.

He boycotted the start of his trial in June 2007 and fired his attorney, holding up proceedings until January 2008 when prosecutors called their first witness.

Witnesses testified about radio exchanges between Taylor and the rebels, arms smuggled from Liberia to Sierra Leone in sacks of rice and diamonds sent back in a mayonnaise jar. One former aide said he saw Taylor eat a human liver.

"We say and have said all along that they are lying," Griffiths said of the prosecution witnesses.

It is estimated that about a 500,000 people were victims of killings, systematic mutilation and other atrocities in Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war. Some of the worst crimes were carried out by gangs of child soldiers fed drugs to desensitize them to the horror of their actions.

After Taylor, the defense team has a list of more than 200 witnesses, though not all are expected to testify. Among them are former African heads of state and high-ranking U.N. officials who will testify on his behalf, according to a list that does not name them.

Griffiths aims to portray Taylor as a peace maker asked by the 15-member Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations to help halt the atrocities in Sierra Leone.

Dan Saryee, a rights advocate who runs the pro-democracy Liberia Democratic Institute, dismissed the idea.

"Taylor's war machinery was never a peacekeeping force; how could it go into Sierra Leone to make peace?" Saryee said. "It is unthinkable."

Associated Press writers Clarence Roy-Macaulay in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Jonathan Paye-Layleh in Monrovia, Liberia, contributed to this report.

BBC Online

Monday, 13 July 2009

Taylor starts war crimes defence

Lawyers for Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia on trial for crimes against humanity, have begun his defence.

He denies 11 charges, including murder, rape and torture, at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague.

Prosecutors say he controlled rebels who carried out atrocities during Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war.

Mr Taylor, who denies the charges, is expected to give evidence in his own defence on Tuesday.



Prosecutors say Taylor directed rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone

He is the first African leader to be tried by an international court.

Claire Carlton-Hanciles, of the court's defence office, told the BBC that Mr Taylor was ready to defend himself.

"Mr Taylor is ready and his lawyers who were employed by the office have ensured that that they have prepped him for the past month-and-a-half," she said.

"I saw Mr Taylor about two days ago. He is in high spirits."

In May, judges rejected a request by Mr Taylor's defence team to acquit him because of a lack of evidence.

The prosecution says Mr Taylor planned atrocities committed by Revolutionary United Front rebels during Sierra Leone's civil war, which ended in 2002.

The RUF were notorious for using machetes to hack the limbs off civilians.

Mr Taylor is accused of passing guns to the RUF in exchange for diamonds from Sierra Leone.

His lawyers are expected to argue that he in fact tried to bring peace to the region and that there is no evidence directly linking him to the RUF.

Mr Taylor started Liberia's civil war in 1989, before being elected president in 1997.

After a period of exile in Nigeria, he was eventually extradited from Liberia in 2006.

The trial, being held by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, was moved to the Netherlands from Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, amid fears it could create instability in the country and neighbouring Liberia.

TAYLOR TIMELINE

1989: Launches rebellion in Liberia

1991: RUF rebellion starts in Sierra Leone

1995: Peace deal signed

1997: Elected president

1999: Liberia's Lurd rebels start insurrection to oust Taylor

June 2003: Arrest warrant issued

August 2003: Steps down, goes into exile in Nigeria

March 2006: Arrested, sent to Sierra Leone

June 2007: Trial opens in The Hague

Profile: Charles Taylor

Q&A: Trying Taylor

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Friday, 10 July 2009

Charles Taylor's defence to start on 13 July

By Lula Ahrens



*The Hague,
Netherlands*

The defence phase of the trial of former Liberian President and alleged 'warlord' Charles Taylor will commence on 13 July. He will answer 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity before the UN-backed Special Court of Sierra Leone.

Taylor (61) will take the stand as the first defence witness after his lawyers present their opening statement. He has pleaded not guilty to all 11 counts including murder, rape, the use of child soldiers and sexual slavery during Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war, in which more than half a million people were killed. The Sierra Leone tribunal heard a series of gruesome testimonies by witnesses last year, during the prosecutorial phase of the trial.

Taylor is the first African head of state to be brought before an international court on war crimes allegations.

His defence team has argued that Taylor should be acquitted because there is insufficient evidence to prove he planned or instigated atrocities in Sierra Leone. But the presiding judge rejected their request last month, saying there is enough evidence to suggest that Taylor provided Sierra Leone rebels with arms, ammunition, manpower and finances, that he offered them "safe haven and moral encouragement", and that he traded so-called 'blood diamonds' for arms. The judge stressed that the decision does not mean that Taylor will be convicted.

Prosecutors accuse Taylor of arming and controlling the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels from neighbouring Liberia, where he held power from 1997 until he was forced into exile in 2003. They say he led the RUF terror campaign against civilians, which included the use of machetes to chop off hands, legs, lips, ears and breasts of thousands of victims.

Whether or not the trial will lead to a conviction will probably become clear within months. International prosecutor Stephen Rapp is leading Charles Taylor's prosecution. He expects the case against Taylor to be completed by January 2010. Rapp believes firmly in the strength of the evidence, which he said has

exceeded his expectations.

Britain, the former colonial power in Sierra Leone, has offered to imprison Charles Taylor if he receives a jail sentence.

Charles Taylor was arrested after his period of enforced exile in Nigeria in 2006. His trial was moved to The Hague for fear that his appearance in an African courtroom could again foment violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

He is being tried at the Hague premises of the International Criminal Court (ICC) but his trial is conducted by the UN-backed Sierra Leone Tribunal in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown.

Charles 'Chucky' Emmanuel Taylor (31), Charles Taylor's American son who headed the notorious paramilitary Anit-Terrorist Unit (ATU) during his father's rule, has already been sentenced by a US court to 97 years in prison for torture at the beginning of this year. He was convicted under a 14-year-old US law allowing the prosecution of its citizens for acts of torture committed abroad. Chucky's trial mainly involved crimes committed in Liberia, not Sierra Leone. He plans to appeal.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Thursday, 9 July 2009

Welcome Back for Taylor's Defense

By Tracey Gurd

This Monday, Charles Taylor's defense team is set to lay out their case before the Special Court for Sierra Leone. We'll be following the trial from the courtroom in The Hague and bringing you daily updates. Our monitor, Sierra Leonean lawyer Alpha Sesay, will continue reporting on the trial.

Taylor's defense is a critical part of the trial. The Prosecution spent 13 months presenting their case: it's now Taylor's turn. It's the job of his defense team to cast doubt on the case that we have heard in court since the prosecution started in earnest in January 2008. Taylor has pleaded not guilty to the 11 charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

On this site you will find an overview of the prosecution's case, as well as comments about why Taylor's side of the story matters. We also have a host of information about the background to the trial as well as the daily coverage of the prosecution's case.

To make it easier for our readers, we are shifting to a different style of reporting. Starting Monday, we will be doing one daily post that captures the key drama and events in the courtroom that day. We will also be creating weekly overviews for those who want to get up to speed quickly with the trial and don't have the time to follow the posts every day. We will continue with our monthly summaries which also look at the broad trends and developments.

We hope that readers will continue to post their views and comments, and continue their conversations with us and with each other on the site as this next phase of the Taylor trial starts up.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Wednesday, 8 July 2009

Taylor's Point of View: Does It Matter?

By Tracey Gurd

Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, will take the stand next Tuesday amid a blaze of media cameras and lights. As the first sitting African head of state to be indicted and prosecuted for his alleged responsibility for some of the worst crimes known to humanity, the laser beam of international attention will zero in as he tells his side of the story. He is pleading not guilty to 11 charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law for his alleged role in a war which ravaged Sierra Leone for 11 years.

The media spotlight can have a downside. For example, lawyers for Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, a Congolese militia leader on trial at the International Criminal Court for allegedly recruiting child soldiers, lamented on the second day of his trial in January 2009 that Lubanga had already been declared guilty by the media. "In the press he is already convicted, convicted before being tried. And in the eyes of a vast majority, as soon as there is an arrest warrant and as soon as the charges are confirmed and the matter is committed to trial, the presumption of innocence disappears," said Catherine Mabilie, Lubanga's head defense lawyer.

With Charles Taylor, prosecuted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, speculation abounds about his role in the Sierra Leonean war and his alleged link to the crimes committed there. The prosecution spent 13 months bringing Sierra Leonean survivors to the stand whose limbs had been amputated, or who had been raped or sexually enslaved by groups allegedly under Taylor's control. They also sought testimony from insider witnesses in an effort to link Taylor to the crimes which were so vividly illustrated by the victims themselves. We have, though, only heard one side of the story.

On Tuesday, we'll hear Taylor's side. This matters for reasons beyond the narrative he will tell us in court.

1. A fair trial right: Taylor, like all defendants before international courts, has the right to be presumed innocent and to defend himself – in person or through the lawyer of his choice. These are two in a package of elements which make up fair trial rights, according to the Special Court for Sierra Leone's own laws as well as both African and international human rights treaties. Taylor has the chance to exercise these rights on Tuesday when he takes the stand to tell his story. We need to listen and not pre-judge his responsibility. That is up to the judges at the end of the trial.
2. A Return of the Rule of Law: The breakdown of the rule of law, and lack of access to justice, was one of the key root causes of the violence in Sierra Leone, according to the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Taylor's appearance on the stand to defend his actions and account for his alleged responsibility is a visible reminder that nobody – no matter how big or how powerful – is above the law. This is an important visual reconstruction of the rule of law for a society whose fabric was torn apart by war. Taylor taking the stand in an internationalized court that is working fairly is a complement to the work that Sierra Leone's own legal reconstruction efforts. Sierra Leonean judges, lawyers and law enforcement professionals have undertaken their own national efforts to combat impunity for mass crimes – in 2002 the national judicial system prosecuted other suspected perpetrators for crimes committed after the Lome Peace Accord was signed in 1999. Meanwhile, on a broader level, the Sierra Leone Bar Association is committed to building a record of the country's own national jurisprudence by developing and compiling law reports as part of an effort to reconstruct Sierra Leone's rich legal history and make it

available to a new generation of lawyers. On the internationalized front, Sierra Leonean lawyers, judges, translators and other court staff have worked together alongside international counterparts to make the Taylor trial possible. Taylor taking the stand, then, is a stark reminder of how far the rule of law has come in Sierra Leone since the brutality and chaos of war ended less than a decade ago.

3. Taylor as a Symbol of International Commitment to Fighting Impunity: Taylor's appearance on the stand at his own trial marks a milestone in international efforts to create a norm of accountability for mass crimes. Over a series of years, heads of state, diplomats and civil society from all over the world – Africa, Europe, the Americas and elsewhere – joined forces to bring Taylor to trial. This included the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States), as well as the United States, Liberian and Nigerian governments, to name a few, who combined to shift Taylor into exile in Nigeria in 2003 and eventually to the Special Court in 2006. This came with the help of civil society: for instance, starting in 2004, two Nigerian businessmen, David Anyaele and Emmanuel Egbuna, whose limbs were allegedly amputated by Taylor's forces in Liberia, challenged Taylor's asylum in Nigeria and sought to have him extradited to the Special Court for Sierra Leone to face justice.

These efforts did not presuppose Taylor's guilt or innocence, but rather recognized that he had a case to answer for the crimes during the war in Sierra Leone – and that such an answer was most appropriately given in court in the context of a trial. Accountability and the commitment to impunity is a principle that is shared across continents and oceans. The Taylor trial is proof of this.

The media are not the only ones which will eagerly await Taylor's testimony on Tuesday. We all have an interest in hearing what he has to say. His side of the story is important. Not only will it add to our understanding of the role he allegedly played in the Sierra Leonean war and to our historical understanding of the conflict, but it will provide the victimized community with one more reminder that their suffering has not been forgotten.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Tuesday, 7 July 2009

The Prosecution's Case: What Happened?

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Sierra Leone from November 30, 1996, to January 18, 2002. The Prosecutor alleges that Mr. Taylor is responsible for crimes which include murdering and mutilating civilians, including cutting off their limbs; using women and girls as sex slaves; and abducting adults and children, and forcing them to perform forced labor or become fighters during the conflict in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor is charged on the basis that he allegedly backed Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels fighting in Sierra Leone; that he had links with senior leaders in the RUF—such as Foday Sankoh, Sam Bockarie (a.k.a. Mosquito), Issa Sesay, and others—and a second warring faction, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC); and that he was responsible for Liberian forces fighting in support of the Sierra Leonean rebels.

The specific counts against Mr. Taylor are:

- Five counts of war crimes: terrorizing civilians, murder, outrages on personal dignity, cruel treatment, and looting;
- Five counts of crimes against humanity: murder, rape, sexual slavery, mutilating and beating, and enslavement; and
- One count of other serious violations of international humanitarian law: recruiting and using child soldiers.

The Prosecutor alleges that Mr. Taylor bears individual criminal responsibility for the crimes on the basis that he allegedly participated in the commission of the crimes by planning, instigating, and ordering them; aiding and abetting them by providing military training and support to the RUF and AFRC; and participating in the execution of a plan to take control of Sierra Leone during which the crimes were committed. The Prosecutor further alleges that Mr. Taylor was a superior to perpetrators of the crimes and failed to take reasonable measures to prevent or punish the crimes while knowing or having reason to know about them.

On April 3, 2006, Charles Taylor made his initial appearance before the Judges of Trial Chamber II of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and on June 4, 2007, the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court Mr. Stephen Rapp gave the Prosecution's opening statement before the Trial Judges in which he explained the nature of the case against Charles Taylor, that factual matters to be proven, the evidence to be presented that summarized the arguments to be made.

The first prosecution witness against Charles Taylor commenced his testimony on January 7, 2008, and during the presentation of the prosecution's case that lasted until February 27, 2009; 91 witnesses testified against Charles Taylor. The following is a categorical breakdown of the 91 prosecution witnesses:

Crime Base Witnesses: 56: Mainly victims of crimes committed in Sierra Leone and whose testimonies are meant to show the atrocities committed by RUF and AFRC rebels in Sierra Leone.

Insider/Linkage Witnesses: 31: Mainly members or insiders of the rebels groups in Sierra Leone and Liberia whose testimonies are meant to link Taylor with the crimes committed by the RUF and AFRC in Sierra Leone.

Expert Witnesses: 4: Witnesses whose education, training, and experience can provide the court with an assessment, opinion, or judgment within the area of their competence, which is not considered known or available to the general public.

Sixty-four of these witnesses testified in open session, while 23 testified in open session with protective measures and the remaining four testified entirely in closed session.

Prosecution's Strategies and Evidence

During the presentation of its case against Charles Taylor, the prosecution sought to highlight the horrors/atrocities that were committed by rebel forces in Sierra Leone and then tried to establish a relationship between Charles Taylor and the forces responsible for the commission of those crimes. In doing this, the prosecution presented more witnesses who testified about the commission of crimes than it did for those witnesses whose testimony sought to establish a link between Charles Taylor and the groups responsible for the commission of the crimes, namely the RUF and the AFRC. This came as a surprise and disappointment to many who expected the prosecution to put more emphasis on establishing a link between Charles Taylor and the RUF and AFRC. This portion of the case, ie, Charles Taylor's link with the RUF and AFRC, is the more difficult part of the case and needs to be proven beyond reasonable doubt if Taylor is to be convicted.

In establishing the link between Taylor and the RUF, however, the prosecution sought to elicit through witnesses, evidence that fell outside the temporal jurisdiction of the court, i.e., prior to November 30, 1996, to prove that Taylor has had a long-standing relationship with the RUF. Through insider witnesses, the prosecution alleged that Taylor and Sankoh established a relationship in Libya in the late 1980s, during which they both promised to assist each other the purposes of their movements in their respective countries (Liberia and Sierra Leone). The prosecution argued that this relationship continued throughout the 1990s and when Taylor eventually became president of Liberia, he continued to provide support for the RUF. The prosecution argued that when the AFRC seized power in Sierra Leone in 1997 and formed a merger with the RUF, Taylor provided immense support to this merger through the supply of arms and ammunition and other materials in return for diamonds. To support its war efforts with diamonds, which the prosecution alleges were transferred to Taylor, the prosecution claims that civilians were used as forced labour in mining camps during which some of them died, that children were forcefully abducted and used as child soldiers, that women were raped and used as sex slaves, that civilians were terrorized by burning their houses, amputating their arms and limbs and that some were killed in the process. The prosecution further tried to prove that Taylor had a direct involvement in the actions of the rebels by assisting them with strategies and ordering them to attack particular parts of the country. Throughout the presentation of its case, the prosecution has focused specifically on proving the following:

Joint Criminal Enterprise: The prosecution elicited evidence to prove that there was a common plan or conspiracy between Taylor, the AFRC and the RUF. The prosecution also tried to prove that this common plan existed before November 30, 1996, which is the date for the temporal jurisdiction of the court. Several prosecution witnesses testified about the relationship that existed between Taylor and RUF leader Foday Sankoh from their respective trainings in Libya and that said relationship continued during the entire war years in Liberia and Sierra Leone. For example, 83rd prosecution witness Dauda A Fornie (DAF) testified that from the early days of the war in both Sierra Leone and Liberia, Sankoh used to pay regular visits to Taylor, during which they discussed how to be of assistance to each other. While part of

this evidence falls outside the court's temporal jurisdiction, the prosecution elicited such evidence to establish a long-standing relationship between the two and to prove that they both had a common plan to support each other in their efforts to capture political power in their respective countries. Witnesses also testified to the regular communications that took place between Taylor and other RUF commanders such as Sam Bockarie and Issa Sesay. The prosecution has also sought to establish the presence of Liberian fighters in Sierra Leone, claiming that those Liberians were sent to Sierra Leone by Taylor.

Individual Criminal Responsibility: The prosecution elicited evidence to prove that Taylor personally participated in the commission of crimes by planning, instigation, ordering, aiding and abetting them through military support and provision of personnel and that he participated in the common plan to take over Sierra Leone, during which atrocities against civilians were committed. Witnesses testified of regular communications between Taylor and senior RUF commanders like Sam Bockarie and Issa Sesay, and that there was an exchange of regular visits between Sierra Leone and Liberia by senior RUF and NPFL officials, during which diamonds were exchanged for arms and ammunition. For example, several witnesses testified about the presence of NPFL fighters subordinate to Taylor such as Zigzag Marzah and Jungle in Buedu, the RUF headquarters in Sierra Leone where they obtained diamonds from Sam Bockarie for onward transfer to Taylor, and during which also they handed over several materials for use by the RUF, allegedly from Taylor.

Superior Responsibility: The prosecution elicited evidence to prove that Taylor occupied a superior position over RUF and AFRC commanders and that he knew or had reason to know that crimes were committed in Sierra Leone and he failed to prevent or punish the commission of the said crimes. For example, 26th prosecution witness Karmoh Kanneh testified that Taylor was in regular communication with RUF Commanders Sam Bockarie and Issa Sesay and while they handed over diamonds to him (Taylor), he knew that civilians, including children were used as forced labour for mining these diamonds. Prosecution argued that as an incentive for their atrocities in Sierra Leone, Taylor gave rewards to RUF commanders through promotions, arms and ammunition and money. For example, 28th prosecution witness Samuel Kargbo testified that the AFRC and RUF referred to Taylor as their God Father and that based on Taylor's advice, the AFRC and RUF attacked Kono in 1998 because the town was strategic for mining diamonds and purchasing much need materials for fighters.

While the prosecution has made efforts to prove that crimes were committed in Sierra Leone and that Taylor bears responsibility for these crimes, no evidence was led to suggest that Taylor himself was ever present in Sierra Leone. The prosecution's case has therefore focused mainly on proving communications that took place between Taylor and senior RUF commanders, the relationship that existed between Taylor's senior commanders and the RUF/AFRC, the regular exchange of visits between Sierra Leone and Liberia by these commanders, trade of diamonds by the RUF and transfer of materials by Taylor for use by the RUF, and the existence of a superior/subordinate relationship between Taylor and members of the fighting forces in Sierra Leone, i.e., RUF and AFRC, which warranted all these happenings. As the case moves to the defense phase of the trial, the defense will seek to rebut prosecution evidence through its own witnesses.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 10 July 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

07/09/2009 07:46:49

Chinese, Liberian vice presidents hold talks, vowing to advance ties

BEIJING, Jul 10, 2009 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping and his Liberian counterpart Joseph Nyuma Boakai held talks Friday, pledging to increase cooperation and promote bilateral relationship. "We will work with this African nation to increase friendly exchanges and cooperation in economy, trade and culture," Xi told Boakai, saying that the two countries should especially make joint efforts to cope with the current international financial crisis. Hailing the China-Liberia relations since they resumed diplomatic ties in 2003, Xi said leaders of both nations have paid special attention to the development of bilateral ties. The two countries have enjoyed mutual respect and increasing cooperation in economy and trade, and supported each other in international affairs. "The China-Liberia friendship brings tangible interests for the two peoples," Xi said. China applauds Liberia's adherence to the one-China policy, Xi noted.

Chinese top legislator calls on enriching China-Liberia relations

BEIJING, Jul 10, 2009 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- Chinese top legislator Wu Bangguo called here Friday to enrich the relations between China and Liberia, suggesting the two make efforts to push ties to a higher level. Wu, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, made the remarks in his meeting with visiting Liberian Vice President Joseph Nyuma Boakai. Wu highlighted the growth of bilateral relations in recent years, noting that China appreciates Liberia's adherence to the one-China policy and the country's emphasis on relations with China. China-Liberian trade hit 400 million U.S. dollars in the first four months of this year, up more than 70 percent year on year and the annual volume was 1.1 billion U.S. dollars in 2008, Chinese custom figures show. Wu told Boakai that exchanges and communication between the two parliaments would help increase political mutual trust, consolidate the social foundation and foster public awareness for the two to promote national relations. The NPC is willing to step up its cooperation with the Liberian National Assembly at various levels and in various fields, Wu said.

Liberian president 'won't resign' after truth panel report

MONROVIA, July 9, 2009 (AFP) -

Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf "is not going to resign," government spokesman Laurence Bropleh said in the wake of a damning report by the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Sirleaf was among a number of politicians whom the TRC recommended be banned from political activities for 30 years because of their alleged involvement in the west African country's brutal civil wars between 1989 and 2003. "The president is not anticipating resigning," said Bropleh, who is also minister of information. "She is not going to resign. The president and the rest of us are reading the report." "What I can tell you, is that President Sirleaf has tried to reconcile the country for the last two years," Bropleh told AFP. "She will continue to do that." In its final report, released on Monday,

the panel investigating Liberia's successive civil wars included Sirleaf's name in a list of people it accused of being "the financiers and political leaders of the different warring factions."

International Clips on West Africa **Access Bank Acquires Cote d' Ivoire Bank**

Lagos, Jul 10, 2009 (Daily Trust/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Access Bank Plc, has opened a banking subsidiary in Cote d' Ivoire following its acquisition of 88% interest in Omnifinance, Cote d' Ivoire through a combination of purchase of existing shares and injection of fresh capital. The bank in a statement in Lagos said the development demonstrates the commitment of its management to the socio-economic development of the continent through intelligent expansion across the regions. The formal opening of the Bank was performed by the President of the Republic of Cote d' Ivoire, Mr. Laurent Koudou Gbagbo, through his representative Mr. Albert Brou, SA on Economic Matters. Also in attendance were Madam Ama Tehua, Minister for Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises, Nigerian Ambassador to Cote d' Ivoire and Chief Executives of financial institutions and the Ivorian business community. Speaking through his representative, Mr. Alber Brou, Mr. Laurent Koudou Gbagbo, expressed satisfaction at the coming of the Bank into Cote d' Ivoire and its intention to partner with the government and people in the realisation of the developmental objectives of the country.

Local Media – Newspaper **UNMIL Clarifies Its Exempt From Arms Embargo**

(The Informer, The Inquirer, The Analyst, Liberian Express, Public Agenda, The News, Heritage)

- UNMIL has clarified media reports concerning the importation of arms into the country by the Ghanaian Contingent serving in the mission.
- In a statement, the mission said it is exempted from the UN Embargo on weapons imported by troops contributing countries and their contingents to support the Mission.
- The mission's clarification was in reaction to media reports that there was 'uncertainty' surrounding the need for new weaponry for the UNMIL Ghanaian Contingent, given that UNMIL is already within 'draw-down mode'.
- The mission said in order to carry out their mandate all peace-keeping contingents require all their equipment to be in a state of permanent readiness saying the mission maintains strict procedures for the tracking of all weapons imported by its contingents.

Split Between TRC Commissioner "Widens"

(New Democrat, The Analyst, New Vision, The Inquirer, Informer, Public Agenda)

- Reports say the split among Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) seems to be widening following the release of the Commission's final report.
- Two of the Commissioner, Sheikh Kafumba Konneh and Pearl Brown-Bull who refused to sign the report have rubbished the findings and recommendations saying they are selective and runs contrary to the process of reconciliation.
- The "Secretariat" of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission however says it is disappointed over the manner in which its final report is being politicized by the two Commissioners.
- According to a statement, the TRC said the Commissioners are misleading the public with half-truths and false information.
- The statement quotes six of its Commissioners that signed the report as saying that they stood by the report.

Government Warns Critics over TRC Report

(The News, Daily Observer)

- Information Minister Laurence Bropleh has cautioned Liberians to act positively on the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia. (TRC).
- Addressing a news conference yesterday, the Minister warned those castigating the TRC in relation to its final report to immediately desist from such act.

- Meanwhile, Minister Bropleh has assured Commissioners of the TRC that the reported threat on their lives will not be tolerated saying their security like other citizens will remain paramount.

US\$10M Hospital Complex under Construction in Tappita, Nimba County

(Daily Observer)

- A two-storey hospital complex worth about US\$10 million, including equipment, is under construction in Tappita City, Nimba County.
- The construction of the hospital, which is being undertaken by the Chinese will upon completion, be run by the Government of Liberia in collaboration with the Chinese.
- According to the contractors, the hospital will have a capacity of 100 beds, a laboratory and other departments.

President Sirleaf Writes U.S. Secretary of State, Says No Lack of Political Will' On Corruption

(Public Agenda, Liberia Journal, New Vision)

- [SIC] President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has informed U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton that there is no lack of political will to address the long-standing systemic corruption in Liberia.
- The letter Secretary of State Clinton comes in the wake of Liberia's recent nose dive in the World Bank's ranking of 212 countries amounting to a loss of 11 percent.
- The President's letter however appears to contradict concerns expressed by the head of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Frances Johnson-Morris and a recent United Nations Panel of Experts report on Liberia suggesting that government is lacking the political will to fight corruption.

Local Media – Star Radio (*culled from website today at 09:00 am*)

Former TRC Commissioner Disagrees with Final Report

- Former TRC Commissioner Pearl Brown-Bull has called on Liberians and the international community to give the Legislature time to investigate the Commission's final report.
- Commissioner Bull who did not sign the report says she is compiling documents outlining her refusal to sign the controversial TRC report.
- Cllr. Bull's believes the compiled document may help in the conduct of the Legislature's investigation.
- The House of Representatives is currently investigating the final report and is expected to conclude the in two weeks.
- Meanwhile, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission say it is disappointed over the manner in which its final report is being politicized by two of its Commissioners.
- According to a statement, the Commissioners are misleading the public with half-truths and false information

Police Director-Designate Launches Door-to-Door Lobby

- Police Director-designate Marc Amblard has conducted series of lobbies with some members of the Senate to ensure his confirmation.
- As part of the lobbies, Mr. Amblard reportedly met behind closed doors with a significant number of Senators on Thursday.
- The confirmation of the Police Director designate has experienced a hitch in the Senate following his open admission that he has no knowledge on security and policing. He has since rejected the claim.

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

House Sets up Panel to Reconcile Threshold Bill

- The House of Representatives has set-up a fifteen member panel to liaise with the Senate to reconcile the controversial population threshold bill.

- The Senate and the House passed the threshold bill under different circumstances but maintained a threshold of forty thousand per electoral constituency.
- Instead of out-rightly concurring with the House, the Senate set the forty thousand-threshold provided no County has less than two seats in the House.
- The provision by the Senate prompted both Houses to announce the holding of a conference to thrash-out the differences.

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

5,000 Students to Benefit from Government Vacation Jobs

- The Ministry of Labor says 5000 students would benefit from Government's vacation job programme this year.
- The National Coordinator of the Bureau of Employment at the Labour Ministry, Mr. George Saah said the vacation job scheme is a collaboration of the ministries of Labour and Youth and Sports.
- He named the other collaborating partners as the National Investment Commission and Civil Service Agency.

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

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

Government Warns Critics over TRC Report

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Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Friday, 10 July 2009

Bosnia marks Srebrenica with no reconciliation in sight

By International Justice Desk



Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia's Muslims will mark the anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre on Saturday with their relations with Serbs at their worst in the 14 years since the slaughter.

The massacre of some 8,000 Muslim men and boys by Serb forces on July 11, 1995 – Europe's worst atrocity since World War II - is to be commemorated across Europe for the first time. Bosnia, which remains sharply divided along ethnic lines.

The European Parliament in January proclaimed the date a day of commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide, calling on countries across the continent to support the move.

While they admitted in 2004 that their forces killed 8,000 Srebrenica Muslims, Bosnian Serb authorities condemned the resolution, in what's seen as a reflection of the revival of nationalist rhetoric that triggered the country's 1992-1999 war.

In another act of defiance on Wednesday, Serb deputies in the Bosnian parliament blocked an initiative to declare July 11 the Srebrenica genocide remembrance day in the former Yugoslav republic.

"Bosnia is facing the worst political crisis since the war," political analyst Srečko Latal told AFP.

"One of the rare encouraging things is that political tensions have not reflected on the relationships between ordinary people," he added, warning that this "might be changing."

Bosnia's inter-ethnic war cost 100,000 lives and left the country split into two highly autonomous entities -- the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Serbs' Republika Srpska.

The eastern town of Srebrenica remains in the Serb-run half - a factor which has added to tensions highlighted this month by the arrest of a massacre survivor while entering Republika Srpska from Croatia.

The detention of Midhat Salihovic was condemned by groups representing survivors, which warned they would cancel Saturday's ceremony in protest.

Salihovic, who was to attend the burial of his father and brother both killed in Srebrenica, was released after questioning.

His arrest was "clearly politically motivated," said Mirsad Tokaca of the non-governmental Centre for the Investigation of War Crimes, adding that local leaders "politicise every issue and manipulate victims."

"We are fortunate to have not had some real incidents" because such abuse of Srebrenica survivors could cause them to react like a "bull to a red rag," said Tokaca.

Experts and analysts warn that events surrounding the massacre anniversary indicate deeper problems in post-war Bosnia.

Political tensions had been rising in the country since its 2006 elections, with Serbs threatening to secede and some Muslim leaders calling for the abolition of Republika Srpska.

Tens of thousands of Muslims are expected gather in Srebrenica on Saturday to attend the memorial and burial ceremony for more than 500 newly identified victims.

Most of these remains were found in secondary graves, where they had been moved from initial burial sites in an attempt by Serbs to cover up war crimes.

So far some 3,200 victims have been buried at a memorial just outside the ill-fated town. Thousands are yet to be exhumed and identified in the area where some 70 mass graves have been uncovered.

The massacre has been termed genocide by both the International Court of Justice, which handles disputes between nations, and the International Criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Bosnian Serb wartime leader Radovan Karadzic, suspected of being behind the massacre, was detained last year and is awaiting trial before the ICTY. His army chief and co-accused Ratko Mladic is still on the run.

GhanaDot.com

Sunday, 12 July 2009

<http://www.ghanadot.com/reviews.akosah.africaevil.071209.html>

Africa's Evil: An Examination

By Kofi Akosah-Sarpong

Africa's evil scene

The eccentric atmosphere following the International Criminal Court (ICC) issuing an arrest warrant for Omar al-Bashir, Sudan's President, on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity (short of genocide) in Darfur open the obscurities of evil in Africa for the past 50 years.

In some sort of grim moment, al-Bashir and the ICC are quarrelling over the darkness in Darfur, where the United Nations estimates that over 300,000 people (and still counting) have died in the past six years of the conflict. So, what have al-Bashir being doing in the past years to have prevented such evil? And al-Bashir, with a cold-shoulder, denies the ICC charges and dismisses any ruling by the ICC as insignificant and rejects the chilling pains, horrors, darkness, and deaths hovering over Darfur.

Africans, who have over the past 50 years seen other horrifying evils across their borders, are a bit relieved over the al-Bashir indictment – at least, for now, psychologically. al Bashir's formal arrest and trial will add up to the updating on Liberia's Charles Taylor, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s ex-warlord Thomas Lubanga and Chad's Hissène Habré. And as Clifton Crais meditates in *Politics of Evil*, Africans, with the help of the international community, are capable of fighting evils that have destroyed their progress as they did against one of the great evils of the 20th century – South Africa's apartheid.

For the past decades, from Idi Amin's Uganda, Jean-Bedel Bokassa's Central African Republic (CAR), Samuel Doe's Liberia, Foday Sankoh's Sierra Leone, Mengistu Haile Mariam's Ethiopia to Juvénal Habyarimana's Rwanda, stains of deadly ethnicity, threats, frightening tension, harassments, massacres, witchcraft, human sacrifices, genocides, deaths, civil wars, famine, murders, floods, locusts and other natural disasters have visited Africa.

With fast developing global communication gadgets, Africa's evils are being tracked day in, day out by satellites, video clips, radio, mobile phones, photographs, and computers, showing vivid clarities of the heavy suffering of the people of Darfur, CAR's north-east region, Chad's Zaghawa and Tama ethnic groups and the DRC's eastern region. Video clips released by the British-based Aegis Trust show a Sudanese government soldier saying he was forced to rape at gunpoint by a senior officer and other doers said such acts were intended to make babies of a different race. Now and then, an evil, a true chasm.

An evening newscast would tell the natural tribulations – the Supreme Being (God)'s anger and nature – locusts' outbreak in Mali, the Gambia, Senegal, Niger and Burkina Faso, the floods in Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia, the deaths by cholera in Zimbabwe, and ebola outbreak in the DRC. As Darfur shows, it would add up to moral evils – the horrors accomplished by Africa's "Big Men" and their foreign accomplices. After Darfur, Liberia and Sierra Leone, anything new about Africa's evils? Hackings in apartheid South Africa? The simultaneous assassination of Guinea-Bissau's President Bernardo Vieira and Chief of its Armed Forces, Gen. Tagme na Waie, on purely tribal hatred grounds? A baby, called Mercy, left to die in Ghana's Upper West region for allegedly being a witch? Or the constant kidnappings in Nigeria's fidgety Niger Delta region where pregnant women are raped to death? Its being awhile in 2005 when the charity Medecine Sans Frontieres reported that almost 500 cases of rape against women, children and men in Darfur – the horror is still going on.

From genocide, rape, human sacrifices, floods, moral evils, cannibalism to juju-marabout mediums and witchdoctors messing up families, Africa has seen all evils and appears to have explored all sorts of evil deeds.

Villages and farms burned in Sierra Leone and Liberia during their civil wars were evils made noticeable. The evil turned people's shelters and livelihood upside down, with some committing suicide as a result.

Despite highly developed high-tech war gadgets, the genocide in Rwanda saw the use of crude weapons – machetes. In *Conspiracy to Murder - the Rwandan Genocide*, Linda Melvern explains how machetes were purposely imported from Egypt and France to commit the genocide in an atmosphere of frightful tribalism. In the Liberian civil war, both President Samuel Doe and then rebel leader Charles Taylor used sophisticated weapons and demonized each other as evil. Doe had Taylor as evil, Taylor had Doe as evil. After Doe's murder and with Taylor confronted with new war as President, Taylor came down as the evil one by rebel forces. Liberian women organized protests that helped push Taylor into exile in Nigeria and later on his on-going trial at The Hague on eleven counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other slaughter.

Is there more or less evil in Africa today?

Is there more or less evil in Africa today than 50 years ago? As Ghana and Benin Republic exemplify, the past years have brought the triumph of democratic order and freedoms against long years of detestable military juntas and insomniac one-party systems. In Ethiopia and Benin Republic communism collapsed; in South Africa apartheid was toppled; the end of the Cold War freed Africa as the theatre of Superpower rival that left Somalia burnt down and Liberia in the gutter. But state violence persists in most African states – in the style of CAR's Bokassa, Guinea's Sekou Toure and Mobutu's Zaire.

Across Africa, democracy and freedoms are flowering, though with pains, announcing the beginning of history, with mass communications and global prosperity knocking down the old order. Africa can take satisfaction from the progress of Ghana, Cape Verde, Senegal, Tanzania, Benin, South Africa, Botswana and Mauritius, without disparagement, that reason, the rule of law, freedoms, human rights and democracy are pushing out some of its evils into the Atlantic and the Indian oceans and enlightening the continent.

But as Somalia, CAR, the DRC and Darfur show some parts of Africa are concurrently darker. The amputations in Sierra Leone and the dismembering of people in Liberia during their respective civil wars not only announced that each African era reveals its own evils but also the sorting out of different darkness. In some parts of Africa evil may be changing its priorities and intentions but pretty much of it remains the same – human sacrifices remains the same, and is increasing in Gabon over the past twenty years, where Jean-Elvis Ebang Ondo, a school teacher, has been waging national campaigns against human sacrifices after his 12-year-old son and a friend were ritualistically killed, their dismembered bodies washed up on a Libreville beach.

From the African culture to the practices of their nation-states, evil does exist – Africans do not argue about that, they know all about the horrors evil brings, as new killing-fields, from DRC, Darfur to Somalia, show, the level of horrors still shock even the most hardened observers, revealing how violent, corrupt, atrocious and vicious Africa's evil perpetrators can be. Natural evils or the hands of the Supreme Being? The 2000 catastrophic flood in Mozambique that made many homeless, about 800 people killed, over 1,400 km² of arable land destroyed and over 20,000 head of cattle lost, the worst in 50 years, shows nature's impulses and brutalities that go past reasoning.

But though Africans know evil exist, they do not give it too much credit, to do that is to give more power to evil than good. Africans acknowledge that their cultural universe is a battleground between evil and good forces, the outcome not in doubt, where good triumphs over evil, over witchcraft and demons. As the re-marking of Uganda by Yoweri Museveni shows after Idi Amin's cataclysm, Africans know evil is temporary but good is permanent. From the various Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, Africans, who are one of the most forgiving of humanity, do not allow their lower instincts and tragedies grow-up as the dominant idea. To do that is to make evil equal to the Supreme Being. What passes for evil, such as a baby called Mercy abandoned to die in Ghana's Upper West region, for allegedly being a witch, may be mere ignorance that can be corrected with public human rights education. Guinea-Bissau's dark metaphysics can be managed by the regional body ECOWAS seeing it as outlandish accidents or absolute stupidity.

Or, for the matter of evil challenging the Supreme Being, Zambia's Roman Catholic Archbishop, Emmanuel Milingo, talks of the fact that in African tradition, development occurs only when the metaphysical is balanced with the physical. And where there is no balance, crises occur. Here darkness isn't empowered; the darkness hasn't the same power as the light.

But as Africans deal with evil, the issue is being moved out of their metaphysics into the intellectual framework, into the human agency, into the ICC, into the various Truth and Reconciliation Commissions across Africa, into the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania, into the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone and the growing democracies, the rule of law and freedoms across the continent. This means evil as an African dilemma will be solved more intelligently outside the African cosmological context.

This moves the evil discussions out of African fatalism and "na god mak am" (God has destined it) syndrome, as the Sierra Leonean would say, to the holistic, making the evil-doers responsible for their actions, as human agencies, and not some demons, evil spirits influencing malevolent perpetrators. When in DRC's Ituri province between June 2007 and June 2008, 6,766 cases of rape were reported, according to the UN, with 43% involving children, the evil debate was being addressed outside demonology to the intellectual framework, to the real world. Despite that, as Lance Morrow explains in *Evil: An Investigation*, evil is amorphous, intellectually unmanageable, an anonymous, hideous charm, difficult to comprehend, and no explanation as to what it is despite attempts by geopolitics and sociobiology to do so.

Evil is alive in Africa

Despite the years of Mobutu, Bokassa, Idi Amin, and Siad Barre that saw more mayhem in Africa and sown the seeds for much of today's Africa's evil – collapsed states, murders, deaths, civil wars, human sacrifice, negative superstitious beliefs, corruption, deadly ethnicity, frightening tension, genocide, crime against humanity – the understanding was that Africa's evil will recede with new generation of elites. But evil is still wandering across Africa, where in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Darfur, Zimbabwe, the CAR, DRC cholera outbreaks are denied, ritual murders on the rise, babies' skulls are dashed against rocks, attempts to twist off the heads of toddlers, girls, their mothers, grandmothers and their male relatives raped at knife – or gunpoint, the weapons then used to inflict mutilation.

Sierra Leone's Foday Sankoh, whose rebel group the Revolutionary United Front amputated people, mutilated opponents, engaged in sexual violence, and burnt down villages and farms, raised atavistic questions about evil. But Africa is confronting new forms of evil – corruption, tribalism, fear of military juntas, threats of one-party regimes, the environment/poor sanitation, Pull Him/Her Down (PHD) syndrome, drugs, HIV/AIDS, deadly superstition, child abuse, genocide, crime, "Big Man" disorder. The fear of military juntas and one party regimes, that saw Africans looted, harassed, threatened, abused with impunity, and killed, are receding with remarkable speed. Nigeria's Gen. Sani Abacha, who ruled from 1993 to 1998 and perhaps the most brutal and looting military junta of Africa's recent memory, robbed over US\$4 billion with his family and cronies, in an atmosphere of abject poverty and despair, fear, deaths, mindlessness, harassment, threats and Big Man's syndrome.

For the past 50 years, much of Africa's evils have not been from nature, or the Supreme Being, but from Africans themselves. The evil has been Africans destroying each other as they attempt to progress in the fashion of PHD. In Ghana, the new John Atta Mills administration, aware of the micro-level PHD projected into the macro-level, that have seen the destructive practice of new regimes either discontinuing or destroying development programs of the previous regimes, says "policies and programmes currently in the pipeline, initiated by the last administration, which supported positive national development, must be thoroughly reviewed, preserved and added to the new initiative that would be recommended."

Whether by nature or African-made, new evils raise new moral queries. Why destroy each other? Why Darfur? Why PHD? Who is to blame? Does evil solely emanates from certain parts of the African culture or not – where do you put responsibilities? Are evils, whether by nature or the African, the act of the Supreme Being and, therefore, not Africans responsibility? Or if Africa's evils are the actions of Africans, then they have moral responsibility to answer?

Does evil exist in Africa?

To be convinced that evil exists in Africa, just look at the rapid spread of churches and mosques across the continent. In a culture where evil spirits and demons are everyday discussions, where people attribute their misfortunes to them and struggle to seek protection against them, and the churches and mosques becoming refuge, evil does exist. In Ghana, the suggestion has been made by Akanayo Konkronko, director of Black Herbal Clinic, a traditional medicine clinic that among other activities battle evil spirits, for the establishment of National Spiritual Courts to try traditional spiritual cases.

Why are Africans obsessed with evil? Who created evil? What does evil look like? If evil is a mystery, as some thinkers argue, can it be scientifically or systematically proved? When Africans speak of evil, what do they mean? Is traditional sense of evil the same as modern sense of evil? Can we know evil; can the African know what drive Sudan's Arab janjaweed militias to engage in racially-motivated rape against African fellow Muslims in Darfur? A dilemma! But we can know the works of evil and the fact that it is strange and understated. President Charles Taylor used to enforce discipline in schools by canning his daughter publicly for indiscipline but is on trial for crime against humanity in The Hague.

As the destructions of the cities and plains in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire show evil is easier to undertake. And as attempts at reconstruction of the cities and plains in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire show creativity is harder. African dictators, who have caused immense destruction of the continent, normally have leisure time while their countries burn. Samuel Doe has nice time drinking whisky while Liberia implodes. Kutu Acheampong entertained women with alcohol and cigarettes at the Osu Castle while Ghana's socio-economic affairs collapsed.

As the hearings at various Truth and Reconciliation Commissions across Africa revealed evil is the dread projected to the category of the incomprehensible. When the rebel forces neared Monrovia, Samuel Doe and his associates fatalistically shouted, "No Doe, No Liberia," and they destroyed Monrovia. Despite the atrocities some Liberians were prepared to forgive. Part of the reason may be their inability to understand why brothers and sisters will easily destroy each other for nothing. And sometimes, as the ICC, the various Truth and Reconciliation Commissions across Africa, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the ICTR indicate, evil is actions we cannot forgive. Thomas Lubanga, a DRC ex-warlord, is on trial at the ICC for recruiting children under 15 to fight. To Lubanga and the likes of Foday Sankoh, what has children got to do with DRC's troubles that they should be used to fight?

Evil and the Other

Nowhere in Africa is evil the Other than in Darfur, Rwanda and Burundi – evil is the one outside the ethnic group. As the Rwandan genocide revealed evil works by dehumanizing the Other: The 1994 Rwandan genocide saw the mass killing of between 800,000 to 1,000,000 of Rwanda's Tutsis and Hutu political moderates by Hutus under the Hutu power ideology over the course of approximately 100 days, from the assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana on 6 April up until mid July. Its rapidity reveals its vicious and well-organized logic, where recognizing Others as evil justified further the mass killings against them.

In Benin, one of the reasons for its stable democracy for the past 16 years is its ability to highly integrate its over 42 ethnic groups, thus moving beyond people thinking in terms of deadly ethnicity, of categories, one of the methods of evil. In the Ethiopia of 1974 to 1991, true to its Marxist-Leninist thinking of categories, not human beings, saw the ruling Marxist Derg, under Mengistu Haile Mariam, used cruel tactics, including executions, assassinations, torture and the imprisonment of tens of thousands without trial, most of whom were innocent, to enforce its categories.

In either Rwanda or Ethiopia, and by extension other African states where the evils of the Other is a pressing issue, evil hardens into the fixed, creates chemistry that brews into obliteration of the Other, by becoming pitiless, persistent. Here comprehension reaches its limit and evil, ever charismatic, lures the mind to destruction. Guinea-Bissau's tribalism is so deadly that President Bernardo Vieira instructed elements of his Balante tribe to kill Chief of Armed Forces, Gen. Tagme na Waie, whose Papel elements in the army retaliated by killing President Viera.

Once again, Benin has superbly integrated its ethnic groups, and despite evil and good still circling in people's mind, like any human being, it has been able to deal with the evil of tribalism by its ability to let its citizens think not in class or categories, despite being a former Marxist ideologue. Such skillful greater ethnic integration cures evil as a malady.

Africa's evil – a metaphysical dilemma

If in the horrors of Darfur and eastern DRC we see Nathaniel Hawthorne's Young Goodman Brown where there is Satanic revelry in the wood and the devil proclaims, "Evil is the nature of mankind. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race," can the Supreme Being be faulted for the evil nature of the perpetrators since He/She is the creator? In African cosmology, the existence of evil (or demons) explains the existence of the Supreme Being, making the Supreme Being meaningful in a world of evil. Whether in African cosmology or Western theology, there have long been attempts by theodicy to grapple with the good Supreme Being and evil. As the revulsions in Darfur and eastern DRC show, people cannot come to terms with such evil, making any explanation of theodicy unpersuasive.

If there is good Supreme Being, then why the horrors in Somalia, Darfur and eastern DRC? Why the use of child soldiers and sex slavery by supposedly adults who should know better? Why dreadful believe in witchcraft? Why do some Africans engage in human sacrifices? Why albinos should in Tanzania, Ghana and other African states be killed for rituals and in Ghana hunchback's hump ritualistically cut off for rituals and the "murder of physically challenged persons for superstitious reasons." Short of clearer theological explanations, thinkers such as Elie Wiesel, the American Nazi holocaust survivor, argue that either the good Supreme Being is in "exile" or "retracted himself," and so the issue of tackling evil, either in Somalia, Darfur or eastern DRC, rest with responsibilities, that will redeem Africa's evil, and "even God himself."

For, whether by the Supreme Being or not, both evil and goodness is in our minds, and will need the ICCs and African civil societies to wash the evil parts for the good of the African in the face of unfreedoms, poor rule of law, certain cultural practices that violate human rights, paternalistic "Big Man" syndrome, and authoritarianism in most African countries. A former DRC vice-president, Jean-Pierre Bemba, an example of Africa's "Big Man" malady, will know soon whether he will be tried for war crimes stemming from rapes in the near-collapsed Central African Republic. Africa's evil have brought out the African condition and helped the growing of the ongoing human rights, democracies and freedoms across the continent. At the same time, these reveal the amorphous nature of evil, its corresponding mysteries, and the dilemma confronting theodicies in addressing evil.

Taking on the evil in the African culture

Martin Meredith, in *The Fate of Africa*, recount that between 17 to 19 April, 1979 the President of CAR, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who had been accused of cannibalism as part of his juju rituals, participated in the massacre of a number of elementary school students after they had protested against wearing the costly, government-required school uniforms. Around one-hundred were murdered and Bokassa personally beat some of the children to death with his cane.

Over the years, it appears the Bokassa evils have been growing in some parts of Africa where juju help massage the Big Man's ego trip. Africans talk of how some of their leaders appropriate the dark parts of their culture for evil – human sacrifices, charms, ritual blood bath, burying of persons alive with juju-marabout charms, and other fearsome rituals that block general enlightenment. Tune into the Charles Taylor trial in The Hague or the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown and you will be shocked beyond believe about the immense dominance and power of juju-marabout practices, savageries, horrors, the despising of the Supreme Being, the filth and the demonism of Africa. But such negative practices playing with the positive parts in the African culture remain constant and familiar, the proportions roughly the same over the years.

How does Africa contain the proportion of God and evil in the horrible deeds that happened to Rwandans, Congolese, Darfuris, Liberians, Sierra Leoneans? Why should God allow Bokassa to have such evil thoughts and practice them with the state's instruments of coercion? If culture is the construction of people, why the construction of these destructive parts that appear to turn some Africans evil?

Aware of certain destructive parts of their culture and the rest of Africa, Ghanaian public intellectuals – academics and journalists - have rolled out some sort of 17th century European Enlightenment campaigns to refine certain aspects of the culture they deemed destructive, and move their society from the shadows of evil, mal-development, negative superstition and unreason. Using universal human rights values as tools to address these evils, Ghanaian public intellectuals are taking on juju-marabout mediums messing up their system; early marriages and betrothal of women that obstruct their progress such as going to school; female genital mutilation and its physiologically negative implications; human sacrifices that are murders; witchcraft as responsible for varied misfortunes that destroy human agencies; the killing of people (mostly women) accused as witches; the cultural dictation of the beating of wives, sometimes resulting in death; the killing of twins that are deemed evil, among others.

By actively engaging the destructive parts of their culture, Ghanaian public intellectuals are revealing the ascendancy of Africans, as an enlightenment act, despite the Darfur's shattering reason and African civilization. From Kwame Nkrumah to Nelson Mandela, the struggles have been to throw light into Africa's evils and help deal with its mysteries. Nkrumah embodies the struggles against the evils of colonialism part of which consequences are responsible for today's Africa's evils (as Rwanda's President Paul Kagame will tell you). Mandela personifies resistance and challenges to creating democracy as anti-dotes to Africa's evils.

Despite complications with the Supreme Being, this is a way of bringing order, either scientific or moral, in DRC, Somalia, Darfur, CAR, western Chad, Burundi and other parts of Africa. Beyond Nkrumah's era, Africa has much more being integrated into the world system, taking in light as well as darkness and its corresponding evils. The weapons used in DRC, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Liberia or Darfur were imported from abroad, and so are Sierra Leonean rebel groups being advised by their foreign backers to amputate their opponents to send strong signal home and abroad. Africa's evils have also increased due to increases in African population and the world's supply of weapons, and as Sierra Leone and Liberia revealed, drugs, as instruments of evil.

Africa's evils are African made

Africa's evils swing between certain practices within its culture and tribulations spewing from the outside world. But at the centre of Africa's evils is the idea that Africans are responsible for the actions that results in their evils. This means, aside from natural evils, the supposedly God's evils become Africans' responsibilities and this explains all of Africa's future results. As Amnesty International reported, it isn't only outrageous but also irresponsibility that the death of the Gambian President Yahyah Jammeh's aunt will be attributed to witchcraft and result in over 1,000 Gambian villagers seized by witch-doctors with the help of state police, the army and the president's personal security guard to secret detention centres and forced to drink traditional juju-marabout potions (some developing kidney complications and some dying) to confess.

The Gambian incident reveals Africa's real evils and false evils. In the Gambian episode, agents of objectivity, rationality and reasoning are mixed in a bizarre cocktail of superstition, irrationality, darkness, and primitivity – and the results are irresponsibilities and false evils.

Why should the president's aunt's death be attributed to witchcraft? Is the aunt immune from natural death? Upon what mechanisms did the witch-doctors accuse the poor villagers of bewitching the aunt to death? Who told the witch-doctors that the villagers are witches, evil and, therefore, death merchants? Where is the proof, where is the beef? Will a European think like the Gambian President or Gambians? Are the differences between the Gambian mind and the European mind due to their respective cultures, and, therefore, that determines, in some aspects, what is evil? Does the Gambian culture stifle the human rights of the villagers accused of bewitching the President's aunt? How do we resolve the contradictions between human rights values and the Gambian culture in relation to accusing an innocent person of being a witch, as evil, a killer?

In Imagining Evil, Gerrie Ter Haar and associates explain that in Africa witchcraft is a way of imagining evil, and as the Gambian episode reveal, it can result in death, terrorization, harassment, psychological damages and threats to society, thus making "witchcraft is a human rights issue" and a development challenge. At higher thinking, this is not different from President al-Bashir's crimes against the Darfuris. And like most of Africa's evils, witchcraft becomes simultaneously a spiritual problem as well as material one, as Haar and associates argue. Yet still, as President Jammeh's actions reveals, "both dimensions are significant, but it appears that no lasting solution to the

problems posed by witchcraft beliefs and accusations will be found unless full account is taken of the spiritual dimension of the matter,” argued Haar and associates

How do African policy-makers resolve the “full account is taken of the spiritual dimension of the matter”? A conundrum, isn’t it? As a Ghanaian traditional spiritualist had suggested, should there be a Spiritual Court to address this aspects of Africa’s evils? In the Gambia as in other parts of Africa, Africa’s evils become a mystery, and Africans are yet to liberate themselves from it no matter how necessary some see evil – some argue Idi Amin’s evils produced the good works of Yoweri Museveni and that South Africa’s horrendous apartheid created the grace and love of the Nelson Mandela legend.

Minimizing Africa’s evils

Whether small or big, part of Africa’s evils emanate from its culture, part due to the gloomy side of globalization, part from Africa’s ancient traces, and part from Africa’s reptilian brain – the tribal hatred, the will to mindlessness, the drive to self-destruction. As Benin Republic, Mali, Cape Verde, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, and Ghana demonstrate, Africa’s evils could be contained with greater dialogue, healthy rule of law, bigger freedoms, vigorous democratic consolidation, dynamic civil society, objective engagement with traditional values and institutions, and active human rights practices. This will help strain out the evils, the Darfurs and the DRCs, and boost the much praised African humanism.

Kofi Kosah-Sarpong, Canada, July 12, 2009