

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



Justice Julia Sebutinde received an Honorary Doctorate of Laws degree from her alma mater,
The University of Edinburgh, Scotland

PRESS CLIPPINGS

**Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and
related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office**

as at:

Tuesday, 7 July 2009

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

Local News

AU Commission Frowns at ICC / *Awoko* Page 3

International News

Trial Chamber Holds Status Conference In Taylor Trial / *Charlestaylortrial.org* Pages 4-5

Former Liberian Warring Factions Criticize Truth Commission... / *Voice of America* Pages 6-7

Sirleaf 'Surprised' at Ban Call / *BBC Online* Page 8

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / *UNMIL* Pages 9- 12

Liberia: TRC's Economic Criminals / *New Democrat* Page 13

Liberia: Opinion Divided On Truth And Reconciliation Findings / *IRIN* Pages 14-15

ICTY Appeals Chamber Confirms Jokic's Contempt Verdict / *The Hague Justice Portal* Page 16

Botswana Faults AU Decision Over Bashir / *The Daily Nation* Page 17

Awoko

Tuesday, 7 July 2009

AFRICANNOTE BOOK



By Rod Mac-Johnson

AU Commission frowns at ICC

The just ended African Union Commission summit in Libya would best be remembered for its decision to end all cooperation with the International Criminal Court as far as the arrest and surrender of any African indicted personality is concerned.

The resolution and its acceptance left many bewildered as to what its in fact giving an open check to leaders to go ahead to violate the rights of the people they rule. It is not difficult to trace the origin of the resolution or what its intention was.

Without being a detective, it could be traced to the Court's warrant issued for the arrest of Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir on alleged human rights charges emanating from the conflict in Darfur.

The African Union has been dodgy over its commitment even since the warrant was made public with many countries hiding behind the cloak of sovereignty and urging that arrest warrant should be held up for a year before being enforced. Quite some few countries as Botswana had taken the stout stand that the arrest warrant on el-Bashir should be enforced regardless of the odds. The argument that the Court has indicted 14 peoples so far-all of them African pales in the arena when put on the slide.

As a political commentator once said, if it is African leaders that have suppressed the rights of the people they govern, what's the bid deal that they should not be accountable for their deeds.

When one takes a retrospective view of what has been ongoing in Darfur, the hundreds of rapes, killing and plunders undertaken by the Janjaweed militias not to even focus on the hundreds of thousands languishing in refugee camps in Chad and neighbouring countries, these activities pale if the Sudanese authorities should not be accountable for it all.

What is now prevalent is that the Sudanese leader has been absolved of what is going on in Darfur. The resolution would only strengthen his resolve to make less haste to sort out the debacle.

Other African leaders would equally pick up the cue that we have our backers in the Presidents club who would work to nullify whatever ills we do to our people. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan no doubt saw it all coming as he warned weeks before the summit that African leaders should pinpoint the misdeeds of their colleagues and not wrap them up in foils.

The resolution undoubtedly has left the rank-and-file African look like unprotected straw in the wind. The political picture it has left is now built on the suspicion that African leaders are working out a chant to protect themselves against all odds and all events.

Nothing happens without a cause, they say and if human rights violations were not taking place, there would not have been the need to set up the International Criminal Court in the first place.

What is being done now is to paint the court as being anti-African and biased. Whatever is the score, the existence of the Court should be enough to make African leaders watch their ways and not, in the local proverbs in the Central African Republic, "holding the feet of politicians close to the fire."

Charlestaylortrial.org

Monday, 6 July 2009

Trial Chamber Holds Status Conference In Taylor Trial

9:30am: On Monday July 6, 2009, the Trial Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone held a Status Conference in anticipation of the opening of the defence case in the Taylor trial. Both Prosecution and Defence counsel raised several issues bordering on the commencement of the defence case on July 13, 2009. Defence Counsel for Mr. Taylor, Courtney Griffiths requested the court's permission to have the defence opening statement delivered on Monday July 13 while Mr. Taylor would commence his testimony on Tuesday July 14, 2009. The prosecution had no objection to this. Presiding Judge Richard Lussick informed Taylor's defence counsel Mr. Griffiths that the defence opening statement should be confined only to the evidence that will be adduced in Mr. Taylor's defence.

Prosecution Counsel Ms. Brenda Hollis informed the Court that there were a few issues that still remain unaddressed by the defence. These, she said, include;

No. of Witnesses to be called by the Defence: Ms. Hollis said that the defence has now filed updated witness summaries and the time estimate for witnesses' testimonies. She said that according to the updated witness list, the defence intends to call 256 witnesses, which is 3 times more than those called by the prosecution. She said that an estimate of the time for the testimonies of these witnesses will amount to 94 weeks or a period of 4 years. This, she said, is a disproportionate number of witnesses and time for their testimonies.

Ms. Hollis also said that the prosecution would want a list of core and back up defence witnesses. She said that she was aware that the defence will give a more refined witness list by the conclusion of Mr. Taylor's testimony but she wanted the Trial Chamber to order this in case it did not happen. She further said that the summaries of some defence witnesses remain inadequate.

2. Expert Witnesses: Ms. Hollis informed that court that based on the summaries of witness testimony submitted by the defence so far, there are three witnesses whose summaries suggest that they are expert witnesses as one will give opinion evidence on the ethnic nature of the conflict, another to respond to Prosecution Expert Witness Ian Smilie's testimony and the other on the cause of Sam Bockarie's death. Defence Counsel Mr. Griffith responded that the said witnesses are not experts but are witnesses of fact. Justice Lussick ruled that the Chamber will stick to the point that the witnesses are witnesses of fact and that if their testimonies suggested that they are expert witnesses, said testimony will not be allowed.

Ms. Hollis also said that it was necessary to monitor Mr. Taylor's communications with witnesses during his testimony.

In response, Mr. Griffiths said that the Defence has been very helpful within the available resources. In response to prosecution concerns about the list of witnesses, Mr. Griffiths said that the prosecution disclosed a list of over 300 witnesses but called only 91 of those. He said that the same thing will apply to the defence as not all those witnesses will testify.

On the Expert witness issue, Mr. Griffiths insisted that the said witnesses are not expert witnesses but witnesses of fact. ON monitoring Mr. Taylor's communications with witnesses, Mr. Griffiths said that this is already the case as all of Taylor's communications with the outside world are monitored by the court. He said, however, that he will not allow any monitoring of conversations between Mr. Taylor and his legal team.

In making specific orders, the presiding judge addressed the following issues:

1. The Trial Chamber thinks that the issue of core and back up witnesses should be revisited at the end of Mr. Taylor's testimony and that the issue of witness summary does not call for any specific order.
2. That the defence has insisted that the 3 witnesses concerned are not expert witnesses and that in case their testimonies suggest thus, the prosecution will be protected by the Rules of Evidence and Procedure and that the Court would make a specific order if necessary.
3. That the list of witnesses should be submitted one month before the witnesses are called and that there is an existing order for the submission of defence exhibits before they are used in court. He said that the prosecution can apply for relief if it can demonstrate that it has suffered any prejudice.

On the accused's communication with witnesses, that the prosecution should make a formal application by motion if the Chamber should consider the issue.

The presiding judge also informed defence counsel that Rule 73 tar (d) allows the Chamber to order the reduction in number of witnesses if they are excessive.

Justice Lusick then ordered that the Defence opening statement will take place on Monday July 13 and Mr. Taylor's testimony will commence on Tuesday July 13 2009.

Court adjourned and will resume on Monday July 13 2009.

Voice of America

Tuesday, 7 July 2009

Former Liberian Warring Factions Criticize Truth Commission Final Report

By James Butty

Some former warring factions in Liberia's recent civil conflict say the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is biased and politically motivated.

The Commission was established in 2003 under the Accra Comprehensive Peace Accord to identify the root causes of the Liberian civil war and determine those who responsible in committing domestic and international crimes against the Liberian people.

Among its recommendations, the TRC called for the prosecution of all warring faction leaders and 98 other associates for gross human rights violations and war crimes.

But at a joint news conference Monday, the former warring factions said the TRC did not live up to the intent for which it was created.



Former Foreign Minister in Charles Taylor's government Lewis Brown told VOA the TRC failed to give alleged perpetrators the chance to confront their accusers.

“What we have is a Truth and Reconciliation Commission largely motivated for selfish political objectives. They are now recommending punitive measures against individuals they did not provide an opportunity to face their accusers or to confront evidence of alleged wrongdoing,” he said.

The warring factions that called Monday's news conference included Charles Taylor's former government, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).

Brown said they called the news conference to renew their commitment to maintain peace, security, forgiveness and reconciliation in Liberia.

He rejected any suggestion that the former warring factions were trying to scapegoat the TRC for the crimes they allegedly committed during Liberia's conflict.

“On the first count, the TRC...conducted an independent survey throughout the 15 political subdivisions to determine whether or not the alleged victims were interested in genuinely reconciling the country. Over 60 percent informed the TRC that they would prefer to confront victims under an atmosphere of forgiveness and reconciliation rather than retributive justice,” Brown said.

Brown said he agreed with those Liberians who argued that there can be no true justice without accountability on the part of alleged perpetrators. But he said accountability cannot be determined prejudicially



VOA Photo - K. Moody
 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf responds to reporter's question during press conference at VOA, 16 Feb 2007

The Truth Commission also recommended that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and 51 others be blocked from holding future public offices in Liberia for 30 years for helping to form and finance warring factions.

Information Minister Lawrence Bropleh said President Sirleaf was still reading the TRC final report, but that she has taken note of the recommendation about her.

"She's not only has seen that report, she has been listening to many Liberians who are very astonished because of that part of the report...many are concerned that this is a democratically elected sitting president. And a report that suggests barring her from public offices for the next 30 years, what does it mean for this democratically elected popular president," he said.

Bropleh said Liberians elected President Sirleaf in 2005 even though they knew she had admitted being one of the financiers of Charles Taylor's rebel movement.

"The Liberian public and the world knew that institutionally, through the Association for Constitutional Democracy in Liberia at the time headquartered in Washington, D.C. President Sirleaf, being an executive member of that association gave \$10,000 to Charles Taylor," he said.

Meanwhile, some TRC members continue to allege that they are being threatened by unidentified individuals or groups.

Bropleh said President Sirleaf has brought back rule of law to Liberia and that any member of the TRC who feels they are being threatened should report such to the constituted authority.

BBC Online

Monday, 6 July 2009

Sirleaf 'surprised' at ban call

Liberia's truth commission has called for President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to be barred from office - a decision her spokesman says is "surprising".

The commission recommended a 30-year ban for Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf and dozens of other senior politicians.

She has admitted that she had backed former warlord Charles Taylor's rebellion 20 years ago.

The recommendations could become law if parliament, in which the opposition has a majority, decides to adopt them.

The BBC's world affairs correspondent Mark Doyle says the report leaves the president - Africa's first elected female leader - in serious political difficulties.



The president was at an African Union summit when the report was released

'Fooled' by Taylor

The president was at the African Union summit in Libya when the report was released last week. Her spokesman, Cyrus Badio, told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme she was still reading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and would respond fully later.

"She will not be able to make an informed opinion until she can digest it, she can conceptualise it to see what the issues are," he said.

"Of course it will come as a surprise to her but let's reserve judgement until she has read through the report."

The commission was established four years ago with a mandate to "promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation" by investigating more than 20 years of civil conflict in the country.

In February the president appeared before the commission and admitted that she had believed Mr Taylor's rebellion against military ruler Samuel Doe in the late 1980s was necessary.

The killing of Mr Doe in 1990 sparked more than a decade of violence between warring factions in which about 250,000 people were killed and the country left in ruins.

Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf apologised to the commission for supporting Mr Taylor - who later became president himself, before fleeing the country.

She said she had been "fooled" into supporting him, adding: "I feel it in my conscience. I feel it every day."

Mr Taylor was eventually arrested on an international warrant and is currently on trial for war crimes in The Hague.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 06 July 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia's truth panel recommends banning Sirleaf from office

Source: AFP World News / English Date: July 06, 2009

MONROVIA, July 6, 2009 (AFP) - Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended Monday that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf be banned from holding public office for 30 years because of her alleged role in a civil war. In its final report, the panel investigating Liberia's successive 1989-2003 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." "They (those named) should be banned from occupying public office for 30 years beginning the day of the passage of the report at the parliament," the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommended. On the list, seen by AFP, the name of Sirleaf, who was elected in 2005, was present along with those of several members of her government, including Transport Minister Jackson Doe, the elder brother of former president Samuel Doe. In a hearing before the commission in February, Sirleaf denied ever being a member of the movement led by rebel leader and warlord Charles Taylor, who was president of the West African country between 1997 and 2003.

Prosecutors: former Liberian President Charles Taylor's list of defence witnesses is excessive

Source: Canadian Press Date: July 06, 2009

THE HAGUE, Netherlands _ The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor could take up to four more years, if his lawyers call all their witnesses, prosecutors told judges Monday at a Sierra Leone war crimes tribunal sitting in The Hague. Taylor is due to begin his defence case next week answering 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone. Taylor will take the stand in his own defence on July 14, a day after his lawyers present their opening statement. Prosecution trial lawyer Brenda Hollis said at a hearing Monday that Taylor's lawyers have lined up an "excessive" list of 256 potential witnesses. However, the defence lawyers are not expected to call all the witnesses on their list to testify. Taylor's lead attorney, Courtenay Griffiths, pointed out that prosecutors listed some 200 witnesses and called 91. Griffiths told judges he has "no intention of being here another four years." Taylor is accused of arming and controlling militias from across the border in Liberia, where he held power from 1997 until he was forced into exile in 2003.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast's SIFCA seeks to double palm oil output

ABIDJAN, July 6 (Reuters) - Ivory Coast's SIFCA group will double its annual palm oil output to 500,000 tonnes over the next three years with technical and financial investment from Singapore's Wilmar International, SIFCA said. It said that the increased output and the SIFCA group's purchase of its own ship to improve regional deliveries should help reduce the reliance on Asian imports while also easing a deepening shortfall in palm oil across West Africa. 'With this project, palm oil production from Palmci (a part of the SIFCA group) will increase from 250,000 tonnes to 500,000,' Palmci Managing Director Angora Tano told Reuters at the weekend. 'Wilmar will bring its techniques and experience in boosting production from plantations and reducing factory and refining costs to make the finished product more competitive for a growing market,' Tano said.

Local Media – Newspaper

Pro-War Crimes Court Group Wants Sirleaf, Others Resign

(The Inquirer, The Monitor, Public Agenda, Plain Truth, The News)

- A pro-war crimes court group, Forum for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court for Liberia (FORUM) has called for the resignation of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and others listed in the TRC final report.
- The Forum's National Chairman, Mulbah Morlu believes the resignation will pave the way for proper investigation.
- The Group earlier endorsed the TRC final report, describing it as the best means for moving Liberia forward.
- According to the group, the collective merits of the Commission's findings outweigh its misgivings about some of the recommendations.
- The group however disagreed with the granting of amnesty to people it considers active combatants who committed heinous crimes.
- The group pledged to advocate for the prosecution of active combatants who were given amnesty.
- Meanwhile, the Plain Truth reports that in a "survey" conducted by the paper, citizens say the President has lost the moral authority to govern and requested her immediate resignation.

TRC Commissioner Gives Dissenting Opinion over Recommendations

(Liberian Express, New Vision)

- A crack has seemingly emerged in the final verdict of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) with a dissenting opinion of one of its Commissioners.
- Commissioner Pearl Brown-Bull disagreed with the final report and declined to sign it claiming criminal prosecution and debarment as recommended runs contrary to the Liberian constitution and other legal instruments.
- She cited among other things an Act enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in 2003 granted immunity from both civil and criminal proceedings against all persons within the jurisdiction of Liberia from act or crimes committed during the civil war from December 1989 to August 2003.
- Meanwhile, the TRC's Information Officer said that there's nowhere in the TRC guidelines that all commissioners have to sign before a report becomes final.

Coalition of Civil Society Group Wants Legislature Reject TRC Report

(The Monitor)

- A consortium of civil society grouping, the Coalition for Peace and Tranquility in Liberia has called on the Legislature to reject the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) final report.
- The group in a statement described the TRC report as a political document targeted at rivals.

- The coalition said the consistent division among TRC Commissioners amounts to waste of tax payers' money.
- They said the report will further divide the people of Liberia instead of helping to bring genuine healing and reconciliation.

ICTJ says TRC Report Vital But Not Last Step

(Liberian Express, The Inquirer)

- The International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) said the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) provides a necessary foundation for Liberians to debate their past and address present and future need.
- In a statement, the ICTJ's President Alex Boraine said the report was a necessary step but there was a need for additional measures to deal with Liberia's difficult past.
- The ICTJ said an Independent National Commission on Human Rights, responsible for ensuring follow-up to the TRC's work, must also be properly organized and given the necessary authority.
- The International Centre for Transitional Justice assists countries pursuing accountability for past mass atrocity or human rights abuse and has been working in Liberia since 2004 to support actors engaging in transitional justice efforts.

Consortium of Political Parties Frown at Delays to Enact Electoral Bills

(Liberian Express)

- A consortium of ten political parties in Liberia has expressed reservation over what they call the consistently failure and delay of the Legislature to enact the electoral bill ahead of the 2011 Presidential and General elections.
- In a statement, the parties made reference to the decision of the Senate to send back to the House of Representatives the Threshold Bill to additionally ensure that no county has less than two seats.

AU Summit Ends As Leaders Discuss Formation of Unity Government

(Heritage, New Vision, Liberian Express)

- The 13th ordinary session of the African Union has ended in Libya with a resolution to implement the Maputo declaration.
- The declaration called for the ten percent of the national budget of each member state to be allocated for Agriculture production. Leaders of the summit agreed to implement the decision.
- Meanwhile, the AU leaders have proposed the introduction of an African Union Authority to replace the African Union.
- The Authority, if approved, will provide for a President, Vice President and Secretaries, to coordinate affairs within Africa in a united manner.

Government Accuses UNMIL Of Drugs Trafficking

(Plain Truth)

- [SIC] Confidence between the Liberian Government and the United Nations Mission in Liberia appears to be sustaining manifold bruises with the former accusing the latter of drugs trafficking.
- The accusation comes in the aftermath of the use of over US\$500,000 confiscated from a Nigerian businessman by government in 2006.
- The allegations are purported contained in an official Government statement forwarded to the House of Representatives committee set up to probe the matter.
- In the statement, The National Security Advisor, Dr. Boimah Fahnbulleh defended Government use of the money claiming that the alleged drugs found on the Nigerian at the time was stolen by an UNMIL Officer insinuating that there was a collusion between the officer and the businessman .

International Partners Support Bureau Of Immigration

(Daily Observer)

- The restructuring of the Liberian security sector has touched the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) with a flurry of international assistance in terms of capacity-building, equipment and other support.
- In a statement, the Commissioner of the BIN, Chris Massaquoi, said negotiations with partners aimed at “strengthening institutional capacity and tackling global migratory issues, particularly within the sub-region” culminated in support from the Dutch, French, American and the German Governments.

ICRC Dedicates Over US\$15,000 Water Kiosk in Monrovia Suburb

(The Monitor, Daily Observer)

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has dedicated a water tower in the Crab Hole community in Duala outside Monrovia.
- Speaking at a brief hand-over ceremony, the Managing Director of the LWSC, Humbu Tulay, said the facility constructed at a cost of US\$15,400 was done with support from the ICRC which decided to initiate a viable water project for residents in the area.
- The project was implemented by a Liberian construction company, Humbu Enterprises, under the supervision of Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC).

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

President Sirleaf Not Embarrassed By TRC Report

- The Executive Mansion says President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is going through the TRC report and would comment appropriately.
- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said the president had been in Libya attending the AU summit and is yet to fully read the report.
- President Sirleaf is among people listed by the TRC to be banned from public office for thirty years.
- At the same time, Mr. Badio says the President is not embarrassed by the inclusion of her name in the report.
- On calls for the President to resign, he said the Executive Mansion will not dignify the call and cautioned people that the ban remains a recommendation.

Pro-War Crimes Court Group Wants Sirleaf, Others Resign

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

Coalition of Civil Society Group Wants Legislature Reject TRC Report

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

LNP Training Academy Suspends Use of Firing Range

- The National Police Training Academy says it has suspended the use of its firing range.
- In an interview, Police Training Commandant James Hallowanger said the decision followed the digging of dirt from around the range by residents.
- Commissioner Hallowanger said the act was unsafe and would delay the training of officers of the Emergency Response Unit when it comes to the use of firearms.
- The Police Training Commandant disclosed the academy is also facing a serious land crisis saying people encroaching on the 100-acre of land given the Academy by the late J. C. N. Howard.

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

AU Summit Ends As Leaders Discuss Formation of Unity Government

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

Consortium of Political Parties Frown at Delays to Enact Electoral Bills

New Democrat (Monrovia)

Monday, 6 July 2009

Liberia: TRC's Economic Criminals

Contest over the economy was one of the prime reasons for the prolongation of the war and its attending horrors as the plunder of meagre resources intensified. The TRC, in its report based on its mandate of investigating economic crimes, has listed several individuals and institutions it concludes are guilty of economic crimes. Excerpts:

Lone Star Communications Corporation (LSC), Liberia's only mobile phone service provider from 2000 to 2004, allegedly committed an array of economic crimes including tax evasion, bribery and telecommunications fraud. LSC was owned by two corporations: (a) Investcom Global Limited, a Lebanese corporation, that owned 60% of LSC; and (b) PLC Limited, a corporation owned jointly by Charles Taylor and Benoni Urey and Emmanuel Shaw II, two of Taylor's financial advisors. Because Liberia has no functioning, land-based telephone system, LSC greatly profited from its status as the only company in the telecommunications sector.

After his election as President, Charles Taylor also received various large payments from known diamond smugglers as "political donations". In May 2001, Abbas Macky, an associate of diamond smuggler Aziz Nassour, paid \$600,000 to Taylor's National Patriotic Party (NPP). In July 2001, Nassour reportedly paid Taylor \$250,000 cash as a "political donation" at a political rally in Maryland County. After Taylor accused NPP Chairman Cyril Allen of stealing some of the of the money, he was removed from his position in the party.

Lone Star Communications Corporation (LSC), Liberia's only mobile phone service provider from 2000 to 2004, allegedly committed an array of economic crimes including tax evasion, bribery and telecommunications fraud. LSC was owned by two corporations: (a) Investcom Global Limited, a Lebanese corporation, that owned 60% of LSC; and (b) PLC Limited, a corporation owned jointly by Charles Taylor and Benoni Urey and Emmanuel Shaw II, two of Taylor's financial advisors. Because Liberia has no functioning, land-based telephone system, LSC greatly profited from its status as the only company in the telecommunications sector.

In 1999, PLC Limited obtained an exclusive license to operate a global system for mobile communications (GSM) service without entering into a competitive bidding process.

In 2001, Investcom LLC attempted to purchase a GSM license in Liberia. Investcom LLC is a subsidiary of Investcom Holdings S.A. and Investcom Global, two corporations owned by Lebanese nationals and incorporated in Luxembourg and the British Virgin Islands, respectively. The government of Liberia informed Investcom that no GSM license was available and that the company should purchase 60% of PLC Limited to enter the telecommunications market in Liberia. As a result, Investcom LLC allegedly acquired 60% of PLC Limited for \$30,000 USD. Between 2000 to 2004, LSC generated approximately \$36 million USD in revenue.

It also allegedly engaged in unlawful price fixing and charged \$.50 US cents per minute for local calls and \$1.25 USD per minute for calls to the United States. LSC also charged \$65 USD for a subscriber identity module (SIM) card, which is mandatory for all mobile phone users on the network, and allegedly inflated the cost of scratch cards, which provide subscribers with pre-paid phone minutes. After LSC's monopoly on the Liberian telecommunications market was broken in 2004, the price of calls fell to \$.20 cents USD and \$.40 cents USD, for local and United States calls, respectively.

In 1997, shortly after Charles Taylor became President, Liberia established an exclusive rice importation agreement with Bridgeway Corporation (BC), a subsidiary of Haddad Group International and owned by George Haddad. BC then began to provide approximately 75% of Liberia's rice. The company allegedly earned tax credits in exchange for selling rice to the government of Liberia. Charles Taylor used BC imported rice as a gift for former NPFL soldiers and his supporters.

IRIN

Monday, 6 July 2009

Liberia: Opinion Divided On Truth And Reconciliation Findings

Monrovia — In Liberia public opinion is divided on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, based on four years of investigations into violations of human rights and humanitarian law during the country's civil conflict.

The commission (TRC), which published its recommendations on 1 July, includes President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf among 50 Liberians who should be subject to public sanctions for their association with perpetrators of war crimes.

The TRC recommends an amnesty for children involved in armed conflict; institutional reform to promote good governance and human rights; a national mechanism for traditional dispute resolution; and reparations to communities and individuals who suffered in the war.

The report recommends President Sirleaf be barred from public office for 30 years once her presidential term runs out in 2011, because she failed to express remorse for her support for Charles Taylor -now on trial for war crimes- in the late 1980s. Sirleaf, like many politicians at the time, supported Taylor in opposition to former President Samuel Doe's regime, and has been open about this support in her memoirs.

Taylor is already on trial in the Special Court for Sierra Leone for 11 counts of war crimes he is alleged to have masterminded in that country during its 11-year war.

The TRC will present its findings to the national legislature and the President in coming days following which the government is expected to outline how it plans to implement the recommendations. IRIN spoke to Liberians about their views on the TRC report.

Russell Allen, human rights advocate with 'Civil Rights and Protection Forum' in the capital, Monrovia:

"I would like for the national legislature to take the report seriously and try to pass it into law so that Liberia cannot revisit the past...There is widespread belief that President Sirleaf would manipulate the report so that she and others cannot be prosecuted. If she does, her reputation will be at stake."

University of Liberia student Prince Roland:

"The report is very biased. Some of the people who committed serious crimes in this country - [their] names are not listed. This is a serious disappointment. If other people's names are not added in this report I foresee [further] trouble taking place here. The TRC commissioners should not pick and choose. Everybody who committed some crimes here should be punished."

University of Liberia student Bobok Kollie:

"The report is balanced. I do not see any bias in it. Inasmuch as the President's name is included along with some key actors, we think the TRC did well. We are anxious [to see the recommendations made into law]."

Joe Pemagbi, head of the Liberia Programme of the Open Society Institute, which has supported the TRC:

"There are some recommendations that people consider to be controversial, but that is for Liberians to determine. ...We have supported the work of the commission [TRC] and would now like to follow up on the recommendations, including peacebuilding projects and the setting up of the Palava Initiative [traditional dispute resolution]. ...We have worked to help Liberians critique the TRC and to raise awareness of [the commission's] work, but we also need to look beyond the TRC at all aspects of the peace process."

Deputy Information Minister Gabriel Williams:

"The government does not have a view on this matter right now. The report has not been officially presented to the President yet so she has not received a copy. When it is submitted we can make a determination on the way forward."

Emmanuel Dolo, research director, of US-based non-profit Minnesota Minority Educational Partnership (MMEP):

"I believe the TRC missed a tremendous opportunity to heal and reconcile the country. Instead, it allowed personal and political interests to supersede the national interest, resulting in lowering the threshold of its evidentiary standards to simply catch a 'big fish' in the form of the President...They had a delicate task in Liberian history, and they used procedures and standards fraught with inconsistencies."

"There are Liberians who are quite susceptible to being radicalized for a variety of reasons including illiteracy, poverty, and psychosocial factors. The TRC's report failed to...set the basis for healing and reconciling the Liberian people."

"President Sirleaf...should take the high road and deepen her commitment to democratic reforms...The executive and legislative branches [of the government] should collaborate with civil society and monetize...the recommendations that have reconciliatory value and discard those that do not meet such a threshold. Anything less could spark vengeance or recrimination."

Kanio Gbala, head of NGO Civic Initiative and member of International Center for Transitional Justice:

Relevant Links

"There are many factors to consolidating peace. One is impunity and ensuring rule of law is in place...when it comes to the names on the list [for prosecutions or sanctions] it is public knowledge what these people did. We do not need to pass a blanket judgement [on them]...some people want to incite division but we must see these recommendations as a tool to move to the next step. People must recognize even if prosecutions are considered, it will take years to put in place."

"We have to go beyond the prosecutions to look at all the recommendations, such as involving communities in reconciliation, institutional reform, guarding the country's collective memory of the war. We should use these recommendations as a platform for dialogue and discussion to remember this country's history so we can move on."

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]

The Hague Justice Portal

Friday, 3 July 2009

ICTY Appeals Chamber confirms Jokic's Contempt verdict

The Appeals Chamber of the ICTY has confirmed Dragan Jokic's conviction for Contempt of the Tribunal.

On 3 July 2009 the Appeals Chamber at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) upheld the conviction and sentence of Dragan Jokic for contempt of the tribunal.



On 17 March 2009 Trial Chamber III at the ICTY found Jokic guilty of contempt stating that he persistently refused to testify in the case Prosecutor v. Vujadin Popović *et al.* without reasonable excuse and willfully and knowingly impeded the due administration of justice. Jokic was issued a subpoena to appear in the Popović *et al.* case, however, he failed to testify citing reasons in a confidential submission filed on 31 October 2007. The Chamber sentenced Jokic to 4 months' imprisonment consecutive to the nine-year sentence he is currently serving.

Dragain Jokic filed a confidential Notice of Appeal on 14 April 2009 and a confidential Appeal Brief on 29 April 2009 arguing that the Appeals Chamber should reverse the judgment and acquit him or pronounce a lower sentence. On 25 June 2009, the Appeals Chamber issued a confidential decision dismissing all grounds of the confidential appeal and affirmed Jokic's sentence.

The Appeals Chamber dismissed all eight of Jokic's grounds of appeal and affirmed the four month sentence imposed by the Trial Chamber.

The Daily Nation (Kenya)
Monday, 6 July 2009

Botswana faults AU decision over Bashir

By WENE OWINO, NATION Correspondent



**Botswana's President
Seretse
Khama Ian Khama**

Botswana has said that it does not agree with the African Union (AU) decision to denounce the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to refuse to extradite Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to stand trial for genocide.

The ICC has issued an arrest warrant for Al-Bashir over genocide in the strife-torn Sudanese region of Darfur but the AU has snubbed the court on the matter.

“The government of Botswana does not agree with this (AU) decision and wishes to reaffirm its position that as a State Party to the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court (ICC) it has treaty obligations to fully cooperate with the ICC in the arrest and transfer of the President of Sudan to the ICC,” a statement from the Botswana Foreign Affairs Ministry said on Sunday.

The statement said the ICC was established specifically to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community by prosecuting those suspected of committing genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

“The people of Africa and Sudan in particular have been victims of these crimes. Botswana strongly holds the view that the people of Africa, including the people of Sudan, deserve to be protected from the perpetrators of such crimes. This is why a majority of African countries, numbering thirty (30) are State Parties to the Rome Statute,” the statement added.

Even before the AU made its decision, Botswana President Ian Khama has previously indicated that when he gets the opportunity, he would arrest Al-Bashir and hand him over to the ICC. Khama said he will arrest Al-Bashir during a visit by Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete early this year.

Botswana vice-president, Lt-Gen. Mompoti Merafhe and Foreign Minister Mr. Phandu Skelemani are expected to hold a press in Gaborone today (Monday 6, July 2009) on the AU decision to rebuff the ICC. Lt-Gen Merafhe and Mr Skelemani attended the AU summit in Sirte Libya.