

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Test for a Court as Prosecutors Face Liberia's Ex-Ruler

By Marlise Simons

Charles G. Taylor, the former president of Liberia, has appeared as a confident witness at his own war crimes trial through more than 50 days, casting himself as a man striving for peace - not the warlord who brought death and havoc in West Africa, as prosecutors portray him.

Charles G. Taylor, the former president of Liberia, addressing the Special Court for Si-

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Test for a Court as Prosecutors Face Liberia's Ex-Ruler

From page 6

erra Leone in The Hague in July. He is on trial on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Time and again, he has denied accusations that he enriched himself from the nation's coffers or ran smuggling operations of weapons and diamonds. He said he had nothing to do with enslaving child soldiers or killing or hacking off the limbs of villagers outside Liberia's borders. Rather, he claimed, he had settled disputes between warring factions and obtained the release of abducted United Nations peacekeepers.

The charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity brought against him at his trial in The Hague, he said, "are all lies."

Now that he has told his side of the story, it is the prosecutors' turn to cross-examine, and they say that Mr. Taylor's long testimony in the trial will provide even more ammunition for them: they accused him of lying repeatedly under oath. They said they would now also seek to impeach him as a witness, which could seriously weaken his defense.

Mr. Taylor's long and direct testimony is unusual for international war crimes trials, where only a few defendants have spent even short periods on the stand. Defense lawyers usually warn talkative clients of the perils of being questioned during cross-examination. Mr. Taylor's cross-examination, now under way, is expected to last several weeks.

One of the prosecution's first steps has been to challenge Mr. Taylor's testimony under oath that he had

never funneled government funds into private accounts. On the witness stand, he repeatedly dared his accusers to show any financial wrongdoing.

In a surprise move this month, prosecutors presented records of a bank account opened in 1999 in Mr. Taylor's name, with deposits adding up to more than \$14 million.

"This was a covert account," Mr. Taylor conceded, appearing uncomfortable. The money was the government's, not his own, he said. Bags of cash were withdrawn from the account and taken to his mansion to pay for arms, ammunition and special operations, he continued. "It was used covertly, and I'm under no obligation to tell you what those covert operations were."

A close to \$2 million deposit came from a timber company, and a \$3.5 million deposit was made by the government of Taiwan, the prosecutor noted. "Why is it covert?" the prosecutor asked. "Because it is going directly into your pocket?"

No, Mr. Taylor replied. These were secret government funds, he explained. If the money had gone to the central bank, he said, "the I.M.F. and the World Bank would know about it." And at the time, Liberia was under an international arms embargo, he recalled.

The exchange was a telling moment in a complex trial that touches on a web of violence and corruption reaching from Liberia into Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast. Prosecutors say that Mr. Taylor, in his drive to expand his power in the

region, was at the center of it all.

An international panel of four judges, based in The Hague, is trying Mr. Taylor specifically for arming and controlling a brutal rebel force in Sierra Leone during the country's 1991-2002 civil war that led to the deaths of some 200,000 people. His indictment holds him accountable for the rebels' crimes as they pillaged, killed and raped, used children as soldiers and hacked off hands to terrorize civilians. Many others died in his home country, Liberia, but events there are not within the mandate of the court.

Much is at stake at this first war crimes trial of an African president. It is seen as a new test for trying a former head of state in an international tribunal. The case against Slobodan Milosevic, the former Serbian president, ended inconclusively when he died in his cell in The Hague.

The court has also come under greater scrutiny from some African governments since another African leader, President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan, has been sought by a different international court on charges similar to those leveled against Mr. Taylor. African leaders so far have said they will not cooperate in detaining Sudan's president.

Mr. Taylor's trial, which began in earnest in January 2008 after a halting start and an initial boycott by the defendant, has seemed to go smoothly, not least because of the calm and respectful court manners displayed by Mr. Taylor and his defense team.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 22 December 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia president to pay corruption whistle-blowers

BBC 22 December 2009,

Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has issued a decree to pay and protect whistle-blowers as part of her campaign to tackle corruption. Under the new measures, anyone giving information leading to money being recovered will get 5% of that sum. And people who fear for their jobs after informing on their superiors will be given transfers if they wish. A BBC reporter says the Anti-Corruption Commission does not have enough staff, so the public is being asked to help. "This act will protect that person who blows the whistle," said acting Justice Minister Eva Morgan, who announced the new measures. But she warned this would only apply if the whistle-blower was not acting out of "spite or revenge". She admitted that the country did not have enough prosecutors or courts to deal with corruption.

U.S. General Visits - Meets With President Sirleaf

Dec 22, 2009 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The Assistant Commander of the Marine Corps, General James F. Amos, on Sunday paid a courtesy call on President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Monrovia. The meeting between the Liberian President and General Amos covered areas of cooperation between Liberia and the United States military in the field of training. Collaboration on the control of narcotics and support for the Coast Guard, as well as Liberia's Defense Sector Reform, were discussed. An Executive Mansion release says the President welcomed General Amos to Liberia and lauded the strong partnership existing between Liberia and the United States. She praised the United States Government for the support it has provided in helping to restructure the Liberian military. "I look forward to more collaboration between our two countries," the President said. General Amos, the second-ranking officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, also met with Defense Minister Brownie Samukai; the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Ellen Margrethe Loj; and the Coordinator of the United Nations Operations in Liberia and UNMIL Force Commander, Lieutenant General Sikander Afzal.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

France: report on Guinea massacres 'overwhelming'

Source: AP WorldStream English (all) Date: December 22, 2009, PARIS_France's foreign minister says a report by United Nations investigators on mass killings and rapes of protesters in Guinea are "overwhelming." Kouchner says "the details of the massacre," as recounted in the 60-page report, "are very painful, even just to read." Kouchner told journalists Tuesday that "you cannot refrain from crying while reading it." The report by a three-member U.N. commission says 156 people were killed or disappeared and at least 109 women or girls were victims of rape and sexual mutilation at the Sept. 28 protests in the capital, Conakry. It says there is reason to believe that Guinea's junta leader Capt. Moussa 'Dadis' Camara and other top officials are directly responsible.

EU tightens sanctions on Guinea junta

BRUSSELS, Dec 22, 2009 (AFP) - The European Union toughened its sanctions Tuesday against the junta in Guinea, introducing an assets freeze and an export ban on equipment that could be used for state repression, diplomats said. The moves come on top of an arms embargo imposed in October and added fresh names to a European travel-ban, increasing the total of persona non grata from 42 "to around 70" a diplomatic source said. Junta head Captain Moussa Dadis Camara is "high on the list" he added. The origin sanctions were introduced in response to "gross violations of human rights, including many deaths, injuries and rape." A UN inquiry panel ruled on Monday that the killing of government opponents by troops in Guinea in September amounted to "crimes against humanity" and that the West African country's military rulers should be held responsible.

Cote d'Ivoire

UN Probing Allegations of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Dec 22, 2009 (UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) has announced that it is taking all possible measures to investigate allegations that have emerged of sexual abuse and exploitation among its military personnel, some dating back to 2006 and potentially involving minors. The UN has a zero-tolerance policy against sexual abuse and exploitation by its peacekeepers. UNOCI announced that it has already taken additional preventive measures to reinforce adherence to this policy among the more than 8,300 uniformed personnel from some 50 countries. In a press release issued on Friday, UNOCI announced that the personnel against whom the allegations have been made have been returned to their country of origin on regular rotation. The mission had conducted an assessment visit in November to the area where the allegations reportedly occurred, one month after receiving allegations of possible misconduct.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf Issues Decree to Protect “Whistleblowers”

(The Daily Observer, Heritage, The Analyst, National Chronicle)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has issued Executive Order Number 22 calling for the protection of whistleblowers.
- Government said the Executive Order, which contains sixteen sections and signed by President Sirleaf December 18 this year is intended to foster its fight against corruption.
- The Whistleblower Executive Order is also intended to sustain the fight against corruption until the Legislature submits a Whistleblower’s Act.
- It calls for the protection of the whistleblower regardless of who makes the disclosure or place of work.

President Sirleaf Sorry For Suspended Minister Bropleh

(The News, Daily Observer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says she feels sorry for suspended Information Minister Laurence Bropleh but will be compelled to take action against him if it is established that he violated the public trust.
- President Sirleaf restated that she has the report from the Justice Ministry and is awaiting the audit report from the General Auditing Commission before deciding what action to take.
- The President reminded sympathizers of suspended Minister Bropleh that she took oath to protect and observe the laws of Liberia.
- Meanwhile, President Sirleaf has expressed frustration over the slow pace of justice in the country and has called on the Justice Ministry to set up a special fast track court for corruption cases.

President Sirleaf says No Damage to Liberia-Guinea Relations

(The News, the Inquirer, The Informer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says there is no damage to relations that exist between Liberia and Guinea.
- The President's comment comes in the wake of a media report claiming that the Liberian government of allegedly supplying arms and ammunitions to Guinean dissidents to unseat the junta's leadership.
- According to President Sirleaf, Guinean authorities were aware that the allegation is untrue.
- Meanwhile, Liberia's Ambassador to Guinea, E. Sumo Jones has also rubbished the allegation saying he would have been the first person to notify the Administration of such negative news emanating from that country.

EX-NPA Employees Besiege Finance Ministry

(Heritage)

- Former employees of the National Port Authority (NPA) Monday besieged the Finance Ministry in demand of "huge arrears" allegedly owed them by government.
- The former employees including widows of some of the former employees said the government owes them US\$1.7 million in arrears.
- Mr. Wleh Doe-Blamo, a man claiming to be one of the leaders of the former employees said though President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was showing some interest in paying their money however it was being done at a snail's pace.

UN Hails First "Star Is Born" Female Winner

(Heritage, The Analyst)

- Nineteen-year-old Vivian Akoto has been congratulated by several United Nations officials in the country on becoming the first female to win "A Star is Born".
- The youth competition which since 2006 uses music as an instrument for social change, national unity, and an agent to promote peace and development in the country.
- Speaking at the finale held at the weekend in Monrovia, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Recovery and Governance, Moustapha Soumaré said investing in young people is investing in the future.
- He said the performances of the youths at the competition indicated that the future of this country was very bright indeed.
- Also speaking during the programme, Acting Information Minister, Elizabeth Hoff said the competition aims to identify young and potential stars in Liberia and is linked to the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- The competition, now in its fourth year, is organized by the Government of Liberia and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

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

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

LANSA Welcomes Lifting Of Arms Ban

- The Liberia Action Network on Small Arms (LANSA) has welcomed the lifting of the arms embargo on Liberia by the United Nations.
- LANSA's Chairman Father Anthony Borwah said the removal of the ban was in the interest of the security of the state.
- Father Borwah believes that requisite security agencies of government needed to be armed to combat armed robberies and acts of insecurity.

- The LANSA Chairman however maintained there is still a proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the country.

Circuit Court Sentences River Gee Paramount Chief To Death

- The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Court in Fish Town, River Gee County has sentenced to death by hanging the Paramount Chief of Matuaken Chiefdom, Wilson Darpoh.
- Paramount Chief Darpoh was sentenced Monday in connection with the brutal murder of Guinean motorcyclist Abdullai Bah.
- According to State Prosecutor Attorney Nkrumah Teekay, Paramount Chief Darpoh is to be hanged on or before January 21, 2010, while Enoch Jasper another partner-in-crime was sentenced to five years imprisonment.

Circuit Judge Speaks Against Unjust Criticisms

- The Resident Circuit Judge of the Civil Law Court, Yussif Kaba has called on his colleagues not to be frightened by unjust criticisms.
- Judge Kaba speaking Monday during the opening of the Court at the Temple of Justice urged his colleagues not to be swayed by partisan demands.
- He said constructive criticisms were acceptable for reform in the Judiciary.
- He however said the employment of paid agents to wage immature war against judicial officers in the press was offensive, which has the tendency to injure the party employing such tactics and the state.

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

Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 09:45 am)

Defeated Senatorial Candidate in Montserrado County By-election Renews Commitment To Help The Needy

- The defeated candidate in the Montserrado County By-election runoff says he remains committed to his determination to make meaningful contribution to Liberia's recovery programme.
- Mr. Clemenceau Urey of the ruling Unity Party said whether or not he succeeds in any political competition, he will not turn his back to the needs of the under privileged and vulnerable people in the communities.
- Mr. Urey speaking at the launch of a Sport for Life programme at the Stephen Tolbert Estate in the Gardnersville suburb said his defeat in the just ended runoff senatorial by-election will not deter him for catering to the needs of women and children.

National TB Control Programme Records Over 1,500 Cases

- The National TB Control Programme of Liberia says it recorded more than 1,500 cases of tuberculosis this year.
- The head of the programme, Deddeh Kesselly said out of the number of 995, new cases were reported in the third quarter of the programme.
- Ms. Kesselly said out of the new cases, 26 are children and 969 are adults.
- She said with the caseload, there is an increase in the number of TB patients in Liberia.

Truth FM (News monitored today at 10:00 am)

President Sirleaf Sorry For Suspended Minister Bropleh

The News (International)

Wednesday 23 December 2009

War crimes in Gaza

By Tayyab Siddiqui

Little noticed but highly significant development took place on December 16 when a British court issued warrants of arrest for Israel leader of Kadima party Tzipi Livni, who was Israel's foreign minister during the December 2008 brutal offensive against Gaza. In 22 days of savagery, Israel pulverised Gaza, ruined its economy and killed 1,417 Palestinian as against 13 Israelis killed.

Israel's devastating military operation has been condemned by the international community as crimes against humanity and war crimes. Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued separate reports documenting Israeli brutality. The UNHCR decided to probe the massive destruction and killing of civilians, including women and children. A delegation led by Goldstone, a former judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa, submitted his report on September 17 to the UNHCR in Geneva corroborating the findings of the AI and the HRW. The matter was also taken up by the UN Security Council but due to the US threat of veto it did not pass any resolution.

Gaza is a tiny strip of land between Egypt and Israel with 1.5 million inhabitants. Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but has retained complete control of the territory by sea, air and land. It has imposed a blockade on Gaza. Essential food supply, fuel, electricity and water have been denied, impoverishing the Palestinians' pitiable existence.

Last week a British court issued the warrant of arrest against Tzipi Livni who was due to visit London to address the Jewish National Fund Conference, but postponed her visit after being tipped off about the proposed action. The warrant was issued at the request of lawyers representing Gaza victims.

The episode, nevertheless, has shaken the Israeli government. Prime Minister Netanyahu rejected 'this absurdity' and has mounted extreme pressure on the British government to withdraw court powers under the ill-defined legal concept of 'universal jurisdiction' on which this warrant was based. Britain is a staunch supporter of Israel. The episode has, therefore, immensely embarrassed the UK. Foreign Secretary Miliband assured Israel that "Britain will no longer tolerate legal harassment of Israeli officials".

This was not the first time that British courts have issued such a warrant. In September a similar warrant was issued against Israel's Defence Minister Ehud Barak under the 1988 Criminal Jurisdiction Act which gives the court in England and Wales universal jurisdiction in war-crime cases. Being a cabinet minister of Israel Barak escaped arrest invoking his diplomatic immunity.

The concept of 'universal jurisdiction' is an extremely useful tool to pursue and punish perpetrators of war crimes. It, however, needs refinement and clarity. Legal experts are of the opinion that due to this legal remedy any high-profile visitor involved in a military or anti-terrorist operation would be scared to visit a country that has such a provision in its constitution which could, in times to come, blossom into an internationally accepted legal norm. Earlier, a Swedish court under the same provision had issued a warrant against Ariel Sharon, Israel's defence minister. The concept is the evolution of humanitarian laws and conventions to fix responsibility of war crimes on the leader rather than the soldier. The International Criminal Court in The Hague, now trying the leaders of Serbia and Yugoslavia, has drawn strength from this concept.

The Kashmiri expatriate in England can perhaps invoke similar action against the Indian government for the atrocities committed by the Indian security forces and killing of 70,000 Kashmiris since 1989.

The writer is a former ambassador. Email: m.tayyab.siddiqui@gmail.com

International Justice Tribune

Wednesday, 23 December 2009

Textbooks to document KR

By Jared Ferrie



*Ta Khmeo,
Cambodia*

In the shade of trees draping over the schoolyard, 3,000 students sit on sheets of newspaper, in crisp white shirts and black skirts or slacks. They wait

patiently for the ceremony to end, then teachers walk between the neat rows handing out textbooks – the first in Cambodia’s history to document the Khmer Rouge in detail.

Students flip eagerly through the pages. Some of them sit in solitary silence, while others turn to their classmates to comment. Shock registers visibly on some of their faces.

It’s a moment that could not have happened without the Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). Despite allegations of corruption and political interference that taint the United Nations-backed tribunal, proponents and critics alike agree that it has sparked a national awakening.

“It has generated the new curriculum in schools. Moreover you also generate community discussion,” said Panhavuth Long, of the Open Society Justice Institute, adding that such discussion may yield methods more effective than trials for Cambodians to reconcile with the past.

On the record

Cambodian television stations broadcast live footage of much of the first trial. The court itself received almost 30,000 visitors during 9-months of testimony, according to court officials.

Many visitors were victims of the regime, bussed in from remote areas of the country to see for themselves the trial of Kaing Guek Eav - better known by his revolutionary name “Duch” - who oversaw the torture and deaths of at least 14,000 people at the S-21 torture center.

At the ECCC, victims have had an opportunity to tell their stories in the same room as the man who admitted his role in atrocities committed at S-21. And lawyers have put some of the most awful details about the Khmer Rouge on the historical record.

In a pattern that continues to this day, Cambodian and international governments have suppressed details about the history of the Khmer Rouge for self-serving political reasons.

For the students at Ta Khmao high school, skimming the pages of their new history book was their most revealing glance yet of the regime that tortured, starved and executed as many as 2 million of their elders. Many survivors were so traumatized that they seldom spoke directly to younger people about what had happened to them.

“Fiction”

Sayana Ser works with the Documentation Centre of Cambodia which produced the book. She said the scant knowledge of the Khmer Rouge she gained as a child came from hearing conversations between her mother and her friends. She thought many of the stories were exaggerated or even “fiction”.

Her high school history classes gave no context to the horrible murmurs she overheard. As a student in the 1990s, there were no references to the regime in her textbooks. They had been deleted around the time Khmer Rouge guerillas signed the Paris Peace Accords, at the beginning of a decade when many leaders and soldiers defected to the government. History textbooks under the Vietnamese-backed government of the 1980s, summed up the Khmer Rouge in just five lines.

But three decades after the regime was toppled, a new generation of students will finally begin confronting their country’s dark history in classrooms across the country.

It will be a reconciliation of sorts between generations. Most teachers were alive during the Khmer Rouge years. Now, young people who have little grasp on what happened during those years will be taught about it those who lived through them.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 23 December 2009

Victims & int'l justice



Hilversum, Netherlands

This week, the International Justice Tribunal will focus on international justice from the victims' perspective. As former UN Chief Prosecutor, Justice

Richard Goldstone told Radio Netherlands Worldwide, "the customers of any justice system are the victims. They're the people who have suffered, who call for justice and who are entitled to justice."

An important reason for pursuing justice, Goldstone says, "is to give an official, credible platform to victims, to tell their stories and get a public acknowledgement of what happened. And frequently, in my experience, that can begin the healing process. It can aid peace because it removes cause for revenge".

The same can be said, to varying degrees, about the Thomas Lubanga trial, the trial of alleged Nazi camp guard John Demjanjuk, the ESMA trial in Argentina, and even the documentation of the Khmer Rouge era in Cambodian text books - all of which are discussed in this week's issue.

But, Goldstone warns, people sometimes expect too much from the justice system. "It's just one of the tools," he acknowledges. "There are others. But it's certainly better than the old way of simply forgetting the past and allowing hatred and revenge to bubble up. Forgetting about the past is a recipe for disaster."