

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



A photo from a diary kept by West African prisoners-of-war in a German prison camp during World War II.

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:

Thursday, 11 March 2010

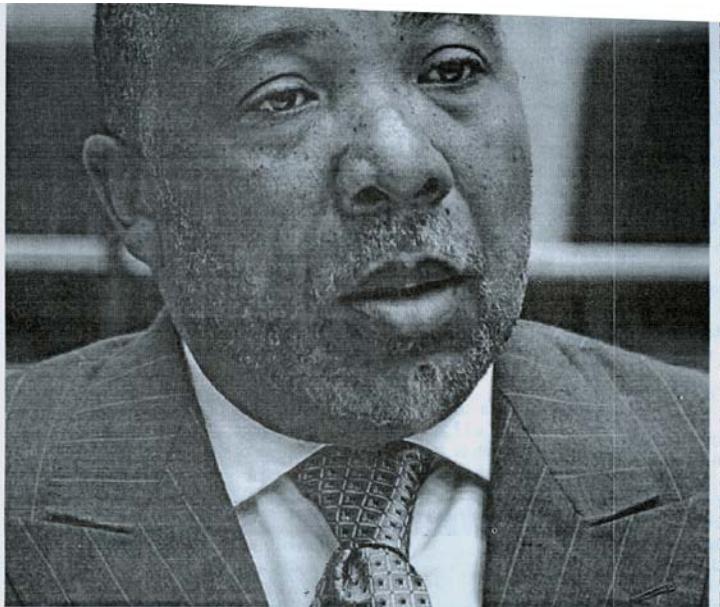
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Premier News

Thursday, 11 March 2010

Witness Says Charles Taylor Never Ordered Rape



Awitness defending Charles Taylor yesterday said he never heard of the former Liberian president giving orders to his rebels to kill, rape, loot or burn people's houses, as alleged by prosecutors.

The protected witness, testifying under the pseudonym DCT 125 and with face and voice distortion, said if any crimes were committed under Taylor's rule, they were isolated incidents which could have taken place without his knowledge. The witness maintained this position in a direct question and answer session with Taylor's defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

"Were you ever aware of Charles Taylor giving an order to kill?" Mr. Griffiths asked the witness.

"Never," the witness responded.

"To burn people's houses?" Mr. Griffiths went on.

"Never," the witness responded again.

"To rape?" Mr. Griffiths went further.

"Never," again, the witness responded.

"To loot?" Mr. Griffiths asked again.

"Never," the witness said for the fourth time.

The witness added that "maybe if that had happened, it would be an isolated incident without Charles Taylor's knowledge."

The witness explained that he had been a pan-African revolutionary colleague of Taylor, adding that he personally did not have any specific interest in helping to start a conflict in Liberia.

He said he did not help Taylor in his invasion of Liberia in 1989, but that together with some other colleagues who were not named in court today, he moved to Liberia to help provide security for the former Liberian president whose NPFL rebel group was split into two when one of Taylor's former rebel colleagues, Prince Johnson, led his break-away faction from the NPFL at the initial stages of the Liberian conflict.

Asked by Griffiths why he and his colleagues had decided to join Taylor in Liberia, the witness explained that "we don't have any interest in Liberia. With notice that his life is threatened and there is a split within his movement, we decided that we should provide him with security to safeguard his life."

DCT 125 has been on the witness stand since last week and a huge part of his testimony has been heard in private or closed session. He has been rebutting prosecution evidence against Taylor, including allegations that the former president gave orders to his rebels to commit crimes such as rape, murder of civilians, looting of civilian property and burning of houses and public buildings. Similar crimes were committed by Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in Sierra Leone, a rebel group which Taylor is on trial for allegedly supporting during the West African country's 11-years civil conflict.

Mr. Taylor has denied providing support to the RUF.

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Wednesday, 10 March 2010

Foreign Countries Prevented Charles Taylor From Liberating Country, Witness Says

Alpha Sesay

Foreign countries interfered in Charles Taylor's revolution in Liberia and prevented the former president from liberating his people, a witness in Mr. Taylor's defense told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today.

"The Liberian revolution failed because foreign hands interfered in the Liberian revolution to disturb the revolution and prevent His Excellency President Taylor from liberating the country," witness DCT 125, who finished his direct-examination today, told the court.

The witness, who has been testifying with protective measures, has given most of his testimony in closed/private sessions and on occasions when his testimony has been heard in open court, he has testified using voice and facial distortion mechanisms. When court resumed this morning, the witness was absent. Mr. Taylor's lead defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, informed the judges that the witness was ill and so could not appear in court. After being given medical treatment by a doctor who said he was fit and able to continue testifying, the judges ordered that the witness be brought to court and take the witness stand.

As he concluded his testimony today, the witness told the judges that Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeeping force was not neutral in the Liberian conflict. He said that the peacekeepers were more sympathetic towards the other Liberian warring factions at the expense of Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group.

During cross-examination by prosecutor Nicholas Koumjian, the witness told the court that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the Sierra Leonean rebel group which Mr. Taylor is accused of providing support for, is not a terrorist organization as alleged by prosecutors. Presiding Judge of the Trial Chamber, Justice Julia Sebutinde, asked the witness to give his definition of terrorist organization.

"It is an organization that is bent on the destruction of life and property without any meaning and purpose, to disturb the peace within the human being," the witness said.

Mr. Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law including crimes of rape, terrorizing the civilian population, murder, conscription and use of child soldiers, looting and pillage of civilian property committed in the territory of Sierra Leone from 1996 to 2002. Prosecutors have alleged that while Mr. Taylor was not present in Sierra Leone, he exercised superior authority over RUF rebels and provided military and financial support to the rebels during Sierra Leone's 11 years conflict. Three RUF commanders have already been found guilty and convicted by Special Court for Sierra Leone judges for similar crimes with which Mr. Taylor is charged.

Before the end of today's proceedings, Mr. Koumjian requested that the cross-examination of the witness be suspended and that prosecutors be given more time to prepare for the cross-examination of the witness. Mr. Koumjian explained that defense lawyers for Mr. Taylor had failed to disclose the witness's personal information to prosecutors within the 21 day period required. The prosecution request was granted and so the witness's cross-examination was suspended.

A new defense witness will commence his or her testimony tomorrow.

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

Tuesday, 9 March 2010

By John Kollie

NEWS ITEM

A defence witness in the trial of Charles Taylor has said he never heard Mr Taylor give an order to kill, torture or rape as leader of the Liberian rebel force, the NPFL. The witness, who was close to Mr Taylor from his days as a fellow pan -African revolutionary, also denied planning the invasion of Liberia with Charles Taylor... From the trial, John Kollie has this transcribed report...

The witness, whose identity is protected for his own safety, said he'd seen no evidence of victimization or revenge during Mr. Taylor's days as a rebel leader.

One of the charges faced by the Former Liberian president is sexual slavery. But the witness said Mr Taylor was very firm and strict if allegations of rape were made against NPFL fighters.

The witness's voice is being distorted in court to hide his identity. "If revenge killings went on under Taylor, they must have isolated and without Charles Taylor's knowledge."

The Defence Witness denied helping Charles Taylor with the invasion of Liberia. Mr. Griffiths asked him why he and his colleagues, who remained unnamed, joined Charles Taylor.

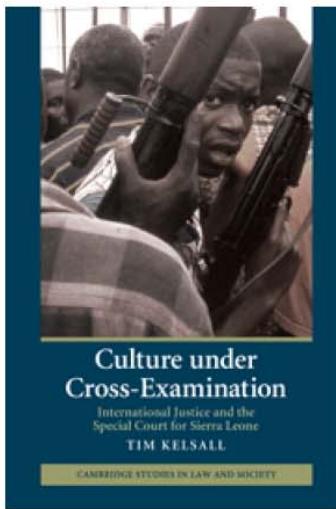
In response the unidentified witness said "*We had no interest in Liberia; we've noticed that his life was threatened and since there was a split within his movement, we decided that we should provide him with security to safeguard his life.*"

The hearing was interrupted several times when the court went into closed session to take sensitive evidence.

The witness cross examination continues in the Hague

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

Cambridge University Press
March 2010



Culture under Cross-Examination

International Justice and the Special Court for Sierra Leone

Tim Kelsall, *Africa Power and Politics Programme, Berkeley War Crimes Studies Center*

The international community created the Special Court for Sierra Leone to prosecute those who bore the greatest responsibility for crimes committed during the country's devastating civil war. Tim Kelsall examines some of the challenges posed by the fact that the Court operated in a largely unfamiliar culture, in which the way local people thought about rights, agency and truth-telling sometimes differed radically from the way international lawyers think about these things. By applying an anthro-political perspective to the trials, he unveils a variety of ethical, epistemological, jurisprudential and procedural problems, arguing that although touted as a promising hybrid, the Court failed in crucial ways to adapt to the local culture concerned. Culture matters, and international justice requires a more dialogical, multicultural approach.

This book at a glance ...

- As the first book-length study of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, it provides a narrative overview of a historically important 'hybrid' tribunal
- Anthro-political study provides a new approach to international trials
- Discusses jurisprudential, procedural, ethical and epistemological issues, and will appeal to lawyers, transitional justice experts, legal anthropologists, students of African studies and philosophers

Contents

1. White man's justice? Sierra Leone and the expanding project of international law; 2. The story of the CDF trial; 3. An unconventional army: chains of command in a patrimonial society; 4. Facts, metaphysics and mysticism: magical powers and the law; 5. We cannot accept any cultural consideration: the child soldiers charge; 6. 'He's not very forthright': finding the facts in a culture of secrecy; 7. Cultural issues in the RUF, AFRC, and Charles Taylor trials; 8. Conclusion: from legal imperialism to dialogics.

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The Daily Star (Lebanon)

Thursday, 11 March 2010

Tribunal for Lebanon courtroom to host its first trial in May

Case of former Liberian leader to move to newly constructed facility

By Michael Bluhm

BEIRUT: The UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon will host its first trial in May – but the proceedings will have nothing to do with Lebanon.

The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is being prosecuted for war crimes and crimes against humanity during the conflict in Sierra Leone, will move into the tribunal's newly constructed courtroom in early May, acting registrar Herman von Hebel told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

Von Hebel's comments also signaled that the tribunal is not counting on any trials this year concerning Lebanon, with the Taylor case slated to occupy the tribunal courtroom for three to six months and plans for the 2011 tribunal budget – unlike this year's budget – to include sums to cover court proceedings.

Taylor's trial will move to the tribunal headquarters near The Hague because of high demand for courtrooms at the nearby International Criminal Court, which is hosting the Taylor proceedings because of security worries at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown, said von Hebel, who also served three years as the registrar in Freetown. Construction of the tribunal's courtroom should finish in mid-April, von Hebel added.

Next year's budget should rise from the \$55.4 million allotted for this year because of projections for potential trials, von Hebel said. The tribunal was created by the UN Security Council to try suspects in the February 14, 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and in other political violence from 2004-08.

The registrar, who acts as the tribunal's chief executive, listed raising money for next year's budget as his top priority. As for this year's funding, the tribunal has collected about half of the \$55.4-million budget, with pledges for the remainder given by "reliable" donors, von Hebel said. "The tribunal is in good shape for this year," he added. Based on the assumption that trials would commence in 2010, former registrar Robin Vincent had mentioned a possible \$65-million budget for 2010 in previous interviews, but his estimate was "a bit too optimistic," von Hebel said.

In other tribunal news, the court should announce in a matter of weeks the hiring of a new chief of investigation, said Radhia Achouri, spokeswoman for tribunal prosecutor Daniel Bellemare. The departure of former chief of investigation Nick Khaldas, an Egyptian-born police chief from Australia, was soon followed by the exit of former registrar David Tolbert, with their leaving sparking much public debate about the progress and working relationships at the tribunal.

Von Hebel, who also spent five years at the International Court for the Former Yugoslavia, said he had "positive" relations with Bellemare and Tribunal President Antonio Cassese, and the departures of top personnel were common at all international courts. Von Hebel said the staff at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon brought a wealth of experience from previous tribunals. "I'm extremely impressed with the quality of people here," he added.

The UN has not yet posted a notice calling for candidates to replace Tolbert as the tribunal's registrar, meaning some six months could elapse before UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon appoints a new registrar, von Hebel said. "The process hasn't even started," von Hebel said, adding that he would likely apply for the post.

Aside from financial aspects, von Hebel said he would focus on public outreach and witness protection, as well as giving assistance to the prosecutor's office. The tribunal has the support of a number of countries regarding witness protection, but von Hebel could not specify the nations involved, he said.

UNICEF

Wednesday, 10 March 2010

Archbishop Desmond Tutu condemns continued violence against children

Children and Transitional Justice: Truth-Telling, Accountability and Reconciliation

FLORENCE-BOSTON, 9 March 2010 – The systematic use and abuse of children in conflicts across the world has continued, unabated, over the past 20 years, Archbishop Desmond Tutu said today. Grave violations which persist against girls and boys include murder, rape, assault, sexual slavery and forced recruitment.

Speaking at the launch of the UNICEF-Harvard University publication, Children and Transitional Justice: Truth-Telling, Accountability and Reconciliation, the Nobel Laureate said that “the seemingly endless cycle of violence and conflict, turning children into instruments of war, must be stopped”.

While prosecution is essential to improve accountability for such crimes, the Archbishop said that any successful transition from war to peace must ensure that children have a place – and a voice – in helping to build a peaceful and stable future. The vision and ambition therefore of transitional justice is to enable societies that have been torn apart by conflict and violence to recover and to empower individuals – victims, witnesses and perpetrators – to recount their experiences and agree on a measure of justice to guide their future.

“The death and suffering of children in times of conflict and instability make it clear that the world has failed to prioritize the rights and well-being of children,” said Archbishop Tutu. “Transitional justice processes are a chance to set things right, and their success or failure depends to a large degree on how they involve children.”

Children and Transitional Justice: Truth-Telling, Accountability and Reconciliation analyses practical experiences to determine how the range of international courts, truth commissions and traditional processes can be applied, both to improve accountability for crimes perpetrated against children and to protect the rights of children involved. It explores safe and meaningful child participation in different circumstances.

The book also makes clear that for a truth commission to have a lasting impact, people need to see the tangible difference in their lives after its work has finished. Education, vocational training and school reconstruction were all noted by children as ways to make up for lost years.

Authored by experts in international law and human rights, Children and Transitional Justice: Truth-telling, Accountability and Reconciliation includes legal analysis and case studies of children’s involvement in the truth commissions of South Africa, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and of efforts to use judicial prosecutions and judicial processes to achieve accountability for crimes committed by the LRA in Uganda, as well as a review of new techniques employing genetic tracing for accountability and family reunification of disappeared children in Argentina and El Salvador. Children and Transitional Justice - Truth-telling, Accountability and Reconciliation makes clear that children must be taken seriously in post conflict transition.