

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



Historic postcard: Mendi chief and subjects in Sierra Leone

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, 21 April 2010

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

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Fayia Musa Denies

Hostage Taking By RUF

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Hague that the RUF did not take civilians hostage. Mr. Fayia also

testified that Mr. Taylor had relationship with the

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Fayia Musa Denies Hostage Taking By RUF

From page 4

RUF beyond 1992, but he did not give military support to the rebel organization.

Continuing his cross-examination Defence Witness Fayia Musa has told the court that the RUF did not take any civilian hostage during the Sierra Leone civil war. He said civilians' decision to stay in RUF controlled territories were based on reports from Guinea and Freetown that Sierra Leoneans were being killed on suspicion of being rebels.

Mr. Fayia Musa emphasized that civilians were not forced to stay in the RUF territories.

But Prosecution Lawyer, Nicholas Kumjian reminded the witness that civilians were not free to leave RUF territories and Mr. Fayia denied.

Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor is accused of supporting the Sierra Leonean rebels who allegedly rained terror on the civilian population. Mr. Taylor and his Defence Team have consistently told the court that he severed all relationship with Former RUF Leader Mr. Foday Sankoh and his rebel movement in August 1992.

But Defence Witness, Fayia Musa said in 1995 Mr. Taylor

invited an RUF delegation to the provincial city of Gbarnga, Mr. Taylor's former headquarters in Bong County. Mr. Fayia said Mr. Sankoh turned down the invitation, but some senior members of the RUF including himself persuaded Mr. Sankoh into accepting the invitation.

The Defence Witness told the court the RUF delegation visited Gbarnga and was later taken to Accra Ghana by Mr. Taylor on what he called site seeing. The cross-examination of Mr. Fayia Musa continues on Wednesday.

Credit BBC World Service Trust.

Taylor Trial Continues

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Leone rebels, the RUF and their allies. But Defence Witness, Fayia Musa has told the Special Court in The Hague that the RUF did not take civilians hostage. Mr. Fayia also testified that Mr. Taylor had relationship with the RUF beyond 1992, but he did not give military support to

the rebel organization... John Kollie reports...

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Charlestaylortrial.org (The Hague)

Wednesday, 21 April 2010

Liberia: Prosecutors Say That Charles Taylor Lied Under Oath When He Testified That RUF Leader Foday Sankoh Was Not Based At Gbarngaha, Liberia

Alpha Sesay



Prosecutors today said that Charles Taylor lied under oath when he said that Sierra Leone's rebel leader only visited him in Liberia for a few days, but did not stay there for months during the civil conflicts in both Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Fayia Musa, a Sierra Leonean rebel insider, today told the Special Court for Sierra Leone that at some point during his country's brutal 11-year conflict, rebel leader Foday Sankoh spent about six months with Mr. Taylor at his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) headquarters at Gbarngaha in Liberia.

Prosecutors said this account by Mr. Musa, former spokesperson for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group, contradicted Mr. Taylor's own account. The former Liberian president, during his own testimony, had denied suggestions that Mr. Sankoh used to stay at NPFL headquarters at Gbarngaha. Mr. Sankoh was only a visitor there for a few days, Mr. Taylor had told the court. According to Mr. Musa, this was not the case.

"You see Mr. Witness, I believe you told us the truth – I believe Charles Taylor lied under oath," prosecution counsel, Nicholas Koumjian, said to the witness.

"He [Mr. Taylor] was asked "did Foday Sankoh base with you in Gbarngaha?" He [Mr. Taylor] answered, "well again, Foday Sankoh was not based with me in Gbarngaha." He was asked "please explain what you mean when you say he was not based with you in Gbarngaha." And he answered, "well to be based means to be permanent from my understanding, so it was not permanent. If your question is, he visited me in Gbarngaha, yes, but he was not based with me in Gbarngaha, no," Mr. Koumjian said, recounting to the witness the earlier exchange with Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Koumjian asserted that Mr. Taylor lied in his testimony when he said that Mr. Sankoh would only spend a few days with him at Gbarngaha and then he would return to Sierra Leone.

"So we see here, Mr. Taylor lies and says that Foday Sankoh would only stay two or three days. You told us that Foday Sankoh and Mr. Tengbeh went to Gbarngaha for six months before they returned to Sierra Leone, isn't that correct?" Mr. Koumjian asked the witness.

In his response, the witness said that "it is correct."

"They [Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Tengbeh] were there up until the end of the Top 40."

The operation code named Top 40, according to Mr. Taylor and several witnesses, marked the end of collaboration between Mr. Taylor's NPFL and the RUF in 1992. Prosecutors, however, allege that the relationship between Mr. Taylor and the RUF continued even after 1992 and that the former Liberian president continued to provide support to the rebel forces in Sierra Leone. With Mr. Taylor's support and advice, prosecutors say that the RUF committed widespread atrocities against the civilian population of Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has dismissed the allegations as false.

Earlier in court today, Mr. Taylor's defense counsel Courtenay Griffiths informed the judges that the defense will be incapacitated to present witnesses next week due to the problems faced by airlines in flying in and out of Europe caused by volcano ash spreading across the continent's airspace. With only one more witness after Mr. Musa presently in The Hague, it may be difficult to transport witnesses from West Africa to Europe unless there is a significant change with flight availability, he said.

"As a consequence of the disruption to airline traffic into Europe, we will have problems progressing the trial next week because currently there is only one further witness in The Hague, and we know not how long the current travel difficulties will persist or whether indeed flights will be coming in from West Africa at anytime soon," Mr. Griffiths told the judges.

Presiding judge, Justice Julia Sebutinde, conferred with her colleagues and then responded that the problems affecting airline traffic into and out of Europe is disappearing gradually. If progress is made with airline traffic by next week, then the challenge envisaged will not affect the trial, she said.

As Mr. Musa concluded his testimony today, Mr. Taylor's ninth defense witness took the witness stand. The witness, a Liberian national, Martin Flomo George, told the court that he fought for the RUF from the start of the conflict in Sierra Leone in 1991 to its conclusion in 2002.

Mr. Taylor has previously said that Liberian nationals could have fought in Sierra Leone as part of the RUF but that he did not send them there. He said that he had no links with the Liberians who fought in Sierra Leone. Liberian nationals now testifying as former members of the RUF seek to corroborate Mr. Taylor's account that they were indeed part of the RUF in Sierra Leone but with no links to Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Flomo's testimony continues tomorrow.

Charlestaylortrial.org (The Hague)

Wednesday, 21 April 2010

Liberia: Charles Taylor Invited RUF Rebels To Visit Liberia In 1995 But Not For Military Advice, Witness Says

Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor invited Sierra Leonean rebels to visit his rebel headquarters in Liberia in 1995, but not to give them military advice, Mr. Taylor's defense witness told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today in The Hague.

Fayia Musa said that in 1995, Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels received an invitation from Mr. Taylor to visit his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) headquarters at Gbarngaha in Liberia. Mr. Musa, a former RUF rebel himself, said that the group's leader Foday Sankoh initially turned down the invitation, but at the behest of several senior RUF commanders, Mr. Sankoh allowed the RUF to visit the former Liberian president. Many RUF commanders, including the witness himself, were enthusiastic about the visit, Mr. Musa said. He said that prior to the visit, the RUF did not know why Mr. Taylor had invited the RUF delegation to Liberia. This raised a question from the Presiding Judge of the Trial Chamber, Justice Julia Sebutinde, about why the rebel forces were enthusiastic about visiting Mr. Taylor.

"You didn't even know the reason why Taylor had invited you. Why were you bending over backwards to go against the will of your leader to visit someone that hadn't stated the purpose?" Justice Sebutinde asked the witness.

"Well, we knew that he would not invite us into security problem at all. We also knew that he was his friend," Mr. Musa responded.

Prosecution counsel, Nicholas Koumjian, sought to know what the RUF hoped to achieve from the visit.

"What did you hope to gain out of going to Gbarngaha?" Mr. Koumjian asked.

"We did not know what we were going to get. First of all, we never knew Charles Taylor before. So one of the reasons why I wanted to go there was to see him, for the first time in my life," the witness said.

"Secondly, I wanted to see what actually he called us for, come what may," he added.

Asked by Mr. Koumjian whether they were "hoping for military support" from Mr. Taylor, the witness said "No, we were not hoping for military support at all."

"In fact, if I knew that it was for military support, I would not go," Mr. Musa said.

Mr. Musa explained that when they visited Liberia, Mr. Taylor took the RUF delegation to the Ghanaian capital, Accra, for sight-seeing.

This account by Mr. Musa sits in tension with other accounts given by Mr. Taylor and defense witnesses that after the fall-out between the RUF and Mr. Taylor's own rebel group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in 1992, Mr. Taylor no longer had any contacts with the RUF. It will be left with the judges to determine the weight to attach to any account given by specific witnesses.

Relevant Links

Also in his cross-examination today, Mr. Musa told the court that reports that the RUF held civilians as hostages are false. He said that all civilians who stayed in RUF-controlled territory did so willingly because of reports that suspected rebels or RUF associates were being killed in Freetown and Guinea.

“The civilians decided to stay, they were not held hostage by the RUF. They were held hostage by the fear of being killed either in Guinea or in Freetown.” Mr. Musa said.

“I am not defending the RUF. A lot of things went wrong but that was the reality on the ground there. They stayed there on their own,” he added.

Mr. Musa denied prosecution suggestions that the civilians were not free to leave RUF territory.

Mr. Musa, a Sierra Leonean national, served as spokesperson and Agricultural Officer for the RUF during the country’s 11 years conflict.

His cross-examination continues tomorrow.

Charlestaylortrial.org (The Hague)

Monday, 19 April 2010

Liberia: Witness Did Not See Liberians As Part Of The RUF Invading Force In Sierra Leone; RUF Did Not Use Forced Labor, He Says

Alpha Sesay

A defense witness for Charles Taylor today claimed he did not see Liberians among the Sierra Leonean rebel forces which attacked the country in 1991. He also dismissed allegations that Sierra Leonean rebels subjected civilians to forced labor during the country's 11-year civil war.

Fayia Musa, a former Spokesperson and Agricultural Officer for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group, today told the Special Court for Sierra Leone that claims that Mr. Taylor's Liberian fighters were part of the RUF fighters who invaded Kailahun district in eastern Sierra Leone in 1991 are false. His account contradicted that of his fellow defense witness, John Vincent — also a former member of the RUF — who had previously told the court that Liberian nationals constituted a huge percentage of the RUF group which invaded Sierra Leone in 1991.

Prosecution counsel Nicholas Koumjian pointed out to the witness that his account differed from that of Mr. Vincent. Mr. Musa, while still casting doubt on Mr. Vincent's account, explained that his account was based on his personal contact with the RUF in 1991. (Mr. Musa has previously told the court that he was a teacher in his hometown of Kailahun who joined the rebels voluntarily when they attacked and captured him).

“The reason I have to doubt it [Vincent's account] is the fact that those who captured me, those who captured us in Kailahun, were not NPFL. The group which met us in Kailahun, they told us they were RUF, they spoke to us in our language in Mende, most of them, some of them spoke to us in Kissi,” Mr. Musa said.

He added that “I cannot really say that Vincent, I cannot tell whether he was lying or not, but the group which met us was RUF.”

Prosecutors have alleged that Mr. Taylor was involved in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF leader Foday Sankoh and that in pursuit of such enterprise, Mr. Taylor provided support to the RUF through the supply of materials and man power to attack Sierra Leone in 1991. Prosecutors say that this support continued throughout the conduct of the war which only ended in 2002. Mr. Taylor, while denying the prosecution allegations has said that he only provided minimal support to the RUF in 1991 when he realized that a rival rebel group, the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), was attacking him in Liberia with help from the government of Sierra Leone. He then joined forces with the RUF, who were fighting to dislodge the Sierra Leonean government, as they had a common enemy at that time, Mr. Taylor said. The former president said that his association with the RUF ceased in 1992.

Also in his cross-examination today, Mr. Musa denied allegations that the RUF subjected civilians to forced labor. The charges against Mr. Taylor include forced labor against the civilian population of Sierra Leone by the RUF. Prosecutors say that the RUF subjected civilians to forced labor for mining and farming purposes during the country's civil war. It is alleged that Mr. Taylor knew of the forced labor but continued to support the RUF. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

Mr. Musa, who served as Agricultural Officer of the RUF told the court that civilians were never forced to farm but that they went to the farm willingly as a means of sustaining themselves.

Relevant Links

Mr. Koumjian who sought to get more form the witness put to him that “the people that lived under the RUF control, they felt like slaves working for the RUF. That was the common feeling in Kailahun, isn’t that true?”

Mr. Musa disagreed.

“That is not true. I have started by telling you that when all of us were captured, for the sake of the people of Kailahun who were not able to escape, I offered my services to organize them so that they will not starve to death and the reality on the ground was that we had to work in order for us to eat.”

Mr. Musa told the court that as Agricultural Officer and spokesperson for the RUF, he did not take part in military activities. He was not part of the military wing of the rebel group and so cannot say much about the RUF’s military operations, he said.

Mr. Musa’s cross-examination continues tomorrow.

The Liberian Journal
 Wednesday, 21 April 2010

Global Witness Welcomes Court Decision to Retry Guus Kouwenhoven on Liberian Timber



(L-R) Taylor, wife, Woiwoyou & Gus

The Dutch Supreme Court has overturned a 2008 ruling by the Court of Appeal which cleared businessman Guus Kouwenhoven of charges of involvement in illegal arms deals and war crimes during the civil war in Liberia between 2000 and 2003. The Court of Appeal will now have to re-

examine the case and bring a new judgment.

Global Witness, which first documented the involvement of Kouwenhoven in illegal logging and arms trafficking in its 2001 report, *Taylor Made*, welcomed the court's decision.

The 2008 ruling by the Court of Appeal had overturned an 8-year prison sentence for arms trafficking handed down by the Court of First Instance in 2006. Global Witness testified on both occasions, after securing a groundbreaking right to keep their sources confidential. Evidence from Global Witness investigations and reports was used by the Dutch prosecutors.

Kouwenhoven was head of the Oriental Timber Company (OTC) during the regime of President Charles Taylor, who waged a brutal war against the people of Liberia and Sierra Leone, funded largely through the sale of diamonds and illegal logging.

OTC, also known also as 'Old Taylor's Children' or 'Only Taylor Chops', was the most notorious logging company in the country and dominated the Liberian timber industry with 1.6 million hectares of concessions.

UN experts and eyewitnesses interviewed by Global Witness reported that it was active in organising weapons shipments, and that its own security personnel blurred with Taylor's armed forces and took part in military activities for the Liberian government. OTC money facilitated arms purchases.

In April 2003, President Taylor's spokesperson, Vaani Paasewe, confirmed this in a media interview: "It is true that, as Global Witness has said in its report, revenues from Liberia's logging industry had been used to import weapons recently despite the UN arms embargo..."

A 2000 UN Expert Panel Report on Sierra Leone referred to Kouwenhoven as a "...member of President [Charles] Taylor's inner circle" and "responsible for the logistical aspects of many of the arms deals [with the RUF]." In 2001 the UN Expert Panel Report on Liberia referred to him as "...one of the most influential businessmen in Liberia".

Kouwenhoven was placed on UN travel ban list in 2001 and in July 2003 sanctions on timber were put in place, on the grounds that timber was being traded by rebel and government forces in exchange for arms.

Patrick Alley, Director of Global Witness, said: "Charles Taylor's regime depended on revenues from the timber industry. OTC's operations in Liberia were illegal and under Kouwenhoven they paid large sums both directly to a known arms dealer and into Charles Taylor's personal bank account, thereby supporting his brutal regime. The war in Liberia cost over 250,000 lives. No one who played a role in perpetuating this conflict should go unpunished."

Daily Observer
Monday, 19 April 2010

‘Our Case Will Be Irreparably Prejudiced’



Despite prosecution fears that their case will be 'irreparably prejudiced' if they do not gain access to important background statements by Charles Taylor's current defense witness, judges late last week disagreed, and ordered cross-examination to start on Monday.

Fayia Musa, a Sierra Leonean national and former spokesperson for Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group, had last week been testifying for Mr. Taylor, who is on trial for allegedly providing support to the Sierra Leonean rebels as they committed crimes during the country's 11-year conflict.

Mr. Musa, who was an RUF insider, has denied prosecution claims that the former Liberian president had control over RUF rebels, telling the judges that Mr. Taylor severed all relationships with the RUF as far back as 1992.

As the witness concluded his direct-examination, prosecutors made an application to the judges that the witness's cross-examination be postponed, citing reasons that Mr. Musa had testified about events which were not contained in his written statements disclosed by defense lawyers. Prosecution counsel, Nicholas Koumjian, told the judges that the prosecution will suffer undue and irreparable damage if the cross-examination of the witness was not postponed.

“This summary indicates that this witness only had one relevant topic to provide evidence on and that is the trips around the sub-region for fund-raising. Now he's testified about many other facts including personal interactions with Charles Taylor. Are these recent inventions? The prosecution can only know that if we see the witness statement and the original statements that this witness gave,” Mr. Koumjian said.

He added: “So we are irreparably prejudiced if we don't get the statement to see if all these interactions with Charles Taylor that this witness testified to that are not in the summary. So the witness summary is patently insufficient.”

Mr. Koumjian asked for the witness's previous statements to the defense, and for a short postponement before cross-examination starts.

Defense counsel for Mr. Taylor, Courtenay Griffiths, opposed the defense application, arguing that the witness's statement had sufficient information to assist the prosecution in their cross-examination of the witness and that the prosecution had enough time to research any necessary information about the witness.

He asked the judges to deny the prosecution's request for additional statements of the witness to be disclosed as well as the request to postpone the witness's cross-examination.

“How is he now unable to cross-examine given that all of the material disclosed by this witness has been in the public arena for a very long time indeed?” Mr. Griffiths asked.

He went on that “it would seem to us that the prosecution has failed miserably to place before this court any evidence that they have in fact been prejudiced, that's the important word, irreparably prejudiced by the so-called paucity of the content of the summary.”

“In our submission, they have neither shown nor sought to show why they are unable to commence their cross-examination now. So in summary, we would submit that both of the applications [disclosure of more witness statements and postponement of the cross-examination of the witness] made by Mr. Koumjian should be refused,” Mr. Griffiths concluded.

After hearing arguments from both parties, the presiding judge of the Special Court for Sierra Leone's Chamber, Justice Julia Sebutinde, ruled that while the witness summary disclosed by the defense to the prosecution was insufficient, such insufficiency was not gross. Justice Sebutinde also stated that prosecutors had not demonstrated any undue or irreparable prejudice that they would suffer if the defense did not disclose additional information or statements about the witness's testimony.

Reading the ruling of the Chamber, Justice Sebutinde said that “the prosecution motion for disclosure of the witness statement is therefore denied.”

She added that “However the Trial Chamber does agree with the prosecution that the witness's evidence-in-chief did span over areas not specifically mentioned in the summary and to this extent, the summary could be considered as insufficient although not grossly so. As mentioned in our prior rulings, the proper remedy in that case is to allow the prosecution sometime to prepare its cross-examination in relation to those areas not contained in the summary.”

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary
21 April 2010

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

UN News in Liberia

UNMIL

Several Graduated From UNMIL Training Programme

[In Profile Daily, The Inquirer]

- At least 26 young Liberians residing in Careysburg, outside Monrovia Tuesday received certificates after completing courses in various disciplines offered by the Pakistani Engineering Contingent of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).
- At a formal graduation ceremony, the Commanding Officer of the contingent, Lt. Muhammed Abid explained that the vocational training course was offered on a voluntary basis to afford interested Liberians the opportunity to build up their skills in areas of their interest.
- He said courses offered during the past three months were intended to share their expertise with Liberians in the areas of Computer Education, Tailoring, Auto Mechanics, Construction Machinery and Masonry.
- The Contingent Commander explained that earlier, the Pakistani trainers provided series of training for 25 personnel of the Ministry of Public Works in prefabricated bridge construction during the actual laying of the arrow panel, bailey bridges at Julijua and Frank Town.

For raping 29-year Old Woman, JASAGBV Wants UNMIL Officer Turned Over For Prosecution

[National Chronicle, Liberia Journal]

- The Journalists Against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (JASAGBV) is calling on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to immediately turn over to the Justice Ministry one of its officers for prosecution.
- The journalist watch group wants Patrick Ordin prosecuted for his alleged involvement in the raping of a 29-year old Liberian woman at his Logan Tow residence in 2009.
- The President of JASAGBV, Lawrence Fahnbulleh, said his organization's investigation revealed that officer Ordin came across the 29-year old woman at UNMIL's headquarters where she had gone to drop the bill of a local newspaper when the officer took the bill and her contact number.
- According to Mr. Fahnbulleh, officer Ordin called the woman to his Logan Town residence and forced her to sleep with him.
- The media advocacy group said a copy of the woman's statement was sent to UNMIL to carry out its investigation, but findings are yet to be revealed to the public.

Other UN News

UNDP Donates To Information Ministry

[National Chronicle, The Informer]

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Tuesday donated 15 motorcycles to the Ministry of Information.
- Making the donation, UNDP Economic Advisor and head of its Strategy and Policy unit, Fitsum Abraha said it was the hope of the UNDP that the donation will help the Ministry in the dissemination of information across the fifteen counties.
- Information Minister Cletus Sieh thanked the UNDP for the donation and observed that it was not strange for the UNDP to be involved in benevolence, noting that the UN agency is a strong partner of the Ministry.
- For her part, Deputy Information Minister for Technical Affairs, Elizabeth Hoff, who negotiated the terms of the donation, said it will add more to the already functional county bureau of the Ministry.

Local News on Liberian issues

President Sirleaf Says Some Aspects Of State Department Report Erroneous

[Heritage, New Democrat, The News]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has described as erroneous some aspects of the US State Department report.
- President Sirleaf said the report was welcoming but government does not agree with some of the findings.
- Mrs. Sirleaf disclosed she would write a letter of disagreement to US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton which will reflect her dissatisfaction over aspects of the report she believes are erroneous.
- Although the President did not state the specifics she said government takes seriously some of the inaccuracies and will address those violations.

President Sirleaf Comments On GAC Audits

[Heritage, In Profile Daily, The Informer, The Inquirer, New Democrat, The News, Liberia Journal, National Chronicle, New Vision, Front Page Africa]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says the audit report released by the General Auditing Commission (GAC) is an instrument government takes very seriously in the fight against corruption.
- President Sirleaf says government will deal with the audit report inline with information contained in it.
- The Liberian leader said there have been complains about the quality and objectivity of the audits but government will act in the confines of the law.
- Mrs. Sirleaf said she is confident that Liberia will meet the HIPC Completion Point despite the challenges.
- The President spoke Tuesday when she addressed a news conference in Monrovia.

Road Rehabilitation Is Government's Responsibility Not World Bank, Declares President Sirleaf

[The Informer]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has declared that all ongoing rehabilitation works in the country is being done by the government, and not the World Bank, as is being speculated.
- President Sirleaf also clarified that her administration did not receive any funding under the Liberia Trust Fund, but rather received funding from friendly nations at the Berlin Conference in 2007, which is being managed by the World Bank.
- Speaking Tuesday at a press conference held at the Foreign Ministry, The President said apart from donor funds, the government is spending a significant amount of money on road rehabilitation in the country.
- She cited the SKD Boulevard, Jamaica Road, and Rehab Road among others as projects that have been funded by tax payer's money.

Consultations Continue For Passage Of Threshold Bill

[The Analyst, Liberian Express, The Inquirer, The News, National Chronicle]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says high level consultation to have the passage of the Threshold Bill for the National Elections Commission to begin registration and other activities to hold the 2011 elections are taking place between the Executive and the National Legislature.
- The passage of the Bill has been tied to the holding of the elections with the NEC raising concern over the issue and insisting that such prolonged delay to have the Bill passed cast a dark cloud over the electoral process.
- Speaking Tuesday when she met with the press, President Sirleaf said although issues surrounding the passage of the Bill are political, the Executive views it as a financial issue.
- She said although the Bill was earlier set to be passed at 40,000 Threshold but she could not take such a decision to sign the Bill given the resource constrains, when the nation is plagued with many more problems.
- She added that whatever the issues are, consultations are now taking place to have the Bill past as soon as possible by resolving the outstanding issues, stressing it is a question of finding what she called, "The Right Balance," between making sure that there is proper representation at the National Legislature based on consensus.

House Rejects Draft Law Reform Commission Act

[New Democrat]

- The House of Representatives has rejected a draft legislation sent to it for passage into law by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

- The proposed legislation relates to an Act seeking the establishment of the Law Reform Commission.
- The House rejected the draft Act on the basis that Liberia does not have the resources to fund another Commission.
- The decision followed the first reading of the proposed Act with a motion from Grand Bassa Representative Byron Browne.
- Representative Browne tied his motion to the debate on the threshold bill which the President vetoed because of the economic cost on the nation.

US Under Secretary Of State Visits Liberia Today

[The Inquirer, Front Page Africa]

- US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns will make a working visit to Monrovia today.
- He will be joined by Susan Page, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of African Affairs.
- Under Secretary Burns will meet with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and members of her cabinet.
- The top American diplomat is also expected to meet with leaders of several opposition political parties.

Chinese Government Delegation Arrives In Liberia This Week

[The Analyst, National Chronicle, New Vision]

- Deputy Chinese Minister of Commerce, Mr. Fu Ziyang at the head of a 42-member high-powered Chinese delegation is expected in the country this week for a four-day visit.
- The delegation includes 14 officials of the Chinese Government, 23 business executives and five journalists.
- According to a Foreign Ministry release, the Chinese delegation will hold bilateral discussions with Liberian government officials headed by Foreign Minister Olubanke King Akerele.
- While in the country, the delegation will pay a courtesy call on President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

IMF On Prospects For Full Debt Waiver For Post-war Liberia

[New Vision]

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says Liberia has made significant progress in its drive to achieve full debt waiver under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC).
- The IMF in a statement said Liberia has met the triggers that are essential to reaching the completion point.
- The Fund named the passage of a new Investment Act that removes discretionary investment incentives and completion of the first annual progress report of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- The statement also spoke of the completion of a second round of audits of five key government Ministries.
- An IMF Mission which visited the Country last week noted that the implementation of the 2009 Public Financial Management Act has made progressed.
- The IMF Mission headed by Christopher Lane said it was impressed with fiscal discipline and management of government's resources.
- The mission reached preliminary understandings with the authorities on fiscal policies for the financial year beginning July 1, 2010 on a revised debt strategy.
- The Statement said as a result of Liberia's performance the Country stands to benefit from about 6.8 million US under its Extended Credit Facility programme.

For 2011 Elections, George Weah's Party Holds Consultation In Accra

[Heritage, Public Agenda, The Analyst, Front Page Africa]

- Executives of the Congress for Democratic Change have resolved to take the lead in rallying the opposition to present a common front in the 2011 elections.
- The Party also resolved to broaden its dialogue process by opening new avenues for constructive engagement with international stakeholders.
- The CDC executives further resolved to work with civil society organizations, regional and world leaders to ensure the wellbeing of the Liberian people.
- The decision followed a meeting with international stakeholders and several interest groups by a nine-member high-level CDC delegation held in Accra, Ghana from April 12 to 18.
- The Party's Standard-bearer Ambassador George Weah headed the CDC delegation to the Accra meeting, which comprises the Party's Chairman Geraldine Doe-Sheriff, Secretary General Eugene Nagbe and Deputy House Speaker Tokpa Mulbah among others.

Inter-Religious Council Secures US\$120,000 For Lofa Crisis Victims

[The Informer, National Chronicle]

- The Inter-religious Council of Liberia (ICRL) has disclosed that it has succeeded in securing a grant of US\$120,000 from Trust Africa to initiate series of dialogues, healings and reconciliations in Lofa County.
- The initiatives according to the ICRL are ways of restoring the spirit of peaceful co-existence and harmony amongst victims of the ugly incidents which resulted into the destruction of the Catholic Church and other worship centres.

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

President Sirleaf Says Some Aspects Of State Department Report Erroneous

(Also reported Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Comments On GAC Audits

(Also reported Radio Veritas, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Expresses Concerns Over The Construction of Huge Buildings By Government Officials

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has expressed concern over the construction of huge buildings by government officials.
- President Sirleaf said such initiatives raise eyebrows.
- She however said the officials often told her they brought their money from abroad.
- The President has meanwhile called on the public to report any unusual transaction to the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission for investigation.

House Rejects Draft Law Reform Commission Act

(Also reported Radio Veritas, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Whistleblower Act Surfaces At Legislature

- A draft legislation seeking the establishment of the Whistleblower Protection Act has been submitted to the Legislature for passage into law.
- The proposed Act was submitted Tuesday to the Senate and House of Representatives by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
- President Sirleaf said the draft Whistleblower Protection Act of 2010, when enacted will protect persons who disclosed information in the interest of the public.
- She said the proposed Act will defend persons employed in the public and private sectors unless otherwise provided by law.
- The President stressed the passage of the draft legislation will curtail act of corruption thereby promoting good governance in the country.

(Also reported Radio Veritas, Sky FM, and ELBC)

IMF On Prospects For Full Debt Waiver For Post-war Liberia

For 2011 Elections, George Weah's Party Holds Consultation In Accra

Malaria Control Programme Launches Spraying Campaign

- The National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) has launched the indoor residual spraying campaign in Gorblee District, Grand Bassa County.
- The Programme Director Tolbert Nyeswah said the campaign is one of the intervention mechanisms and strategies put in place to fight malaria.
- Mr. Nyeswah said the walls and ceilings of homes will be sprayed and the exercise will have lasting effects against mosquitoes for up to nine Months.
- According to him, the exercise will last for thirty days and the NMCP would target about 50,000 households.
- The NMCP's Director has meanwhile called on residents to cooperate with the team by allowing the spraying of their homes.

Multi-million Dollar Company Held For Missing Man

- The State Prosecutor in Bomi County has declared the Management of Sime Darby liable for the mysterious disappearance of a 35-year old man at the plantation.
- Attorney Jumah Karnley said the Company must be held legally responsible because Amos Ganteh disappeared while in the care of the hospital.
- Amos Ganteh was admitted at the hospital on March 14 following injuries he sustained from an accident.
- According to Attorney Karnley the hospital could be declared not credible if the missing man is not found.
- Meanwhile, reports say the Administrator of the Sime Darby hospital Robert Hence has been charged with kidnapping.

Fate Of LBS Director General-designate Still Undecided

- Conflicting accounts have emerged in the Senate over the motion for reconsideration on the rejection of the Director General-designate of the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS).
- The conflicting accounts surround the real backer of the motion for reconsideration.
- It was earlier announced by Senate Pro-tempore Cletus Wotorson that Sinoe Senator Mobutu Nyepan was behind the reconsideration motion.
- But, on Tuesday, the Presiding officer of the Senate Daniel Naatehn told reporters his fellow Gbarpolu Senator Theodore Momo was also behind the motion.
- He said Senator Momo filed his personal reconsideration motion which will be hopefully decided this Thursday.
- Reports say it could have been a blow in the face of the rejected nominee Ambrose Nmah if Senator Momo had not filed the motion.

(Also reported Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

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

“Perpetrators Of Lofa Violence Will Face Prosecution” - President Sirleaf

- President Ellen Johnson says those who perpetrated the recent violence in Lofa County will face prosecution.
- Several persons were reportedly killed and many others wounded in the February 2010 violence that a UNMIL investigation attributed to mere rumors.
- Addressing a news conference Tuesday at the Foreign Ministry, President Sirleaf said findings and recommendations of the investigation conducted are currently before Vice President Joseph Boakai.
- She said Vice President Boakai who himself was in Lofa when the violence sparked out is looking into the findings and recommendations to determine an appropriate action.
- The President said those who set houses, churches, mosques and vehicles at blaze during the February violence will not go unpunished.

US Under Secretary Of State Visits Liberia Today

Chinese Government Delegation Arrives In Liberia This Week

International Clips on Liberia

Sirleaf slams corruption

<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Sirleaf-slams-corruption-20100420>

Monrovia - **Liberia's** President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on Tuesday insisted she was determined to fight graft after an official audit raised suspicions of malpractice involving her finance minister. "Corruption is a big problem, it is a societal problem. It is more than a government problem or an executive problem. It is a societal problem which we all have to fight," Sirleaf told reporters. Her comments follow the publication of a report from **Liberia's** independent General Auditing Commission accusing the finance minister, a close ally of the president, of failing to account for millions of dollars of public funds. "The ministry of finance is yet to account for \$5m it spent. This amount was mentioned in a report made and signed by Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan but no justification was given on how this amount was spent," a GAC statement said. Ngafuan has dismissed the report as "politically motivated". Sirleaf has pledged to root out corruption in the war-ravaged West African country and since the start of the year has suspended two ministers suspected of graft, including her own brother.

Pirates seize Liberian cargo ship with 21 crew off Oman: EU

<http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/somalia-piracy.47y>

(NAIROBI) - Pirates stormed a **Liberian**-owned bulk carrier with 21 Filipino crew on Wednesday, as the end of the monsoon season brought a fresh assault on one of the world's most vital maritime routes. Pirates armed with AK47 assault rifles and a rocket-propelled grenade launcher scaled the sides of the Voc Daisy in the Gulf of Aden and took control of the vessel, the European Union's naval force in the region said. The crew was "able to raise the alarm before the four armed pirates... stormed onboard and cut their lines of communication," EUNAVFOR said, adding that the crew was safe. The incident happened 190 nautical miles (325 kilometres) east of Salalah, Oman. The 183 metre (600 feet)-long carrier, which was on its way from the United Arab Emirates to the Suez Canal, was captured before it could enter the protected transit corridor set up by the naval force in the Gulf of Aden. An international flotilla of warships has been patrolling the gulf, one of the world's busiest maritime routes, since 2008, in a bid to stop the hijackings.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

Guinea leader sacks pro-Camara army chief

CONAKRY (Reuters) - The interim head of **Guinea's** junta has sacked the chief of the armed forces, a perceived ally of ailing and sidelined military leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, a spokesman said. No reason was given for the removal of Colonel Oumar Sanoh, but the sacking comes amid rumours that some soldiers are trying to undermine efforts by the interim leader, General Sekouba Konate, to stabilise and hold elections in the world's top bauxite exporter. "Colonel Nouhou Thiam, formerly chief of staff of the army, is named chief of staff of the armed forces, replacing Colonel Oumar Sanoh," Lt. Mohamed Kasse, a spokesman for junta boss Konate, said in a statement on state television late on Tuesday. Sanoh was head of the military when security forces killed at least 150 pro-democracy demonstrators at a rally in September, but he was not directly implicated in most reports on the massacre.

Côte d'Ivoire

Senegal's Wade asked to mediate in Ivorian crisis

DAKAR (Reuters) - President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal has been invited to mediate in **Ivory Coast's** political stalemate and will travel there on Thursday, Wade's spokesman said. Years of mediation efforts by Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore have failed to usher **Ivory Coast** towards elections, which would trigger new investment and rejuvenate the agricultural sector of the top cocoa grower, analysts say. "President Wade is going to **Ivory Coast** for a working visit. He has been asked by President (Laurent) Gbagbo to speak to all sides to try and unblock the situation," Mamadou Mamba Ndiaye, Wade's spokesman, told Reuters on Wednesday. "He is going there as a wise man of Africa to support all the efforts that are being made in Ivory Coast." **Ivory Coast** is still recovering from a 2002-03 civil war that split the country in two, and has repeatedly delayed post-war elections originally due in 2005 after rows over the disarmament of rebels and the drawing-up of voter lists. U.N. officials have said leaders on all sides of the political conflict are benefitting from the status quo through a mix of illegal taxation, corruption and smuggling. **Ivory Coast's** press speculated on Wednesday that Wade's arrival would signal the end of Compaore's efforts to solve the crisis. There was no immediate comment from Burkina Faso.

UN technical assessment mission meets United States ambassador and head of European Union

ABIDJAN, **Côte d'Ivoire**, April 21, 2010/African Press Organization (APO)/ — The head of the United Nations Assessment Mission, Raisedon Zenenga, and the United States ambassador in **Côte d'Ivoire**, Wanda Nesbitt, reviewed the political situation in **Côte d'Ivoire** on Monday, 19 April. According to Mrs. Nesbitt, it involved examining the electoral process and the current issues, together. "We tried to discuss how the international community can continue to accompany and help **Côte d'Ivoire** to emerge from the crisis," she said at the end of the meeting, which took place at the headquarters of the United Nations Operation in **Côte d'Ivoire** (UNOCI). The American diplomat called on the **Ivorian** political actors to make the maximum effort to resolve the current blockage on the electoral list. "The population is suffering and it is very important for **Côte d'Ivoire** to move forward," she concluded. In the afternoon, Mr. Zenenga exchanged views with the acting Chargé d' Affaires of the European Union Delegation, Yves Gillet, at UNOCI's headquarters. "We outlined our analysis of the Ivorian situation and we exchanged views on the current issues especially the voters' list, reunification and DDR," said Mr. Gillet at the end of the meeting. Mr. Gillet also said that he exchanged views on UNOCI's role in the months and years to come.

The UN assessment mission visits the ICC in Yamoussoukro

ABIDJAN, **Côte d'Ivoire**, April 21, 2010/African Press Organization (APO)/ — A delegation of the United Nations technical assessment Mission, led by Mrs. Nanette Ahmed, held on Sunday 18 April 2010 in Yamoussoukro, a working session with the chief of the Integrated Command Centre (ICC), Colonel Major Kouakou Nicolas, on the activities, difficulties and prospects of the ICC in the crisis-resolution process. "We had a frank and very open discussion," Mrs. Ahmed, Coordination Officer at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York, said at the end of the meeting. During the meeting, several questions were addressed, including the lack of resources and logistical difficulties. "We need conventional law enforcement material so that the ICC can fully play its role, which consists of providing security for the election," said Colonel Kouakou. In this regard, he appealed for the total or partial suspension of the embargo on arms in Côte d'Ivoire. Mrs. Ahmed recalled the procedures required for this. "A written request should be sent directly to the Security Council", she explained.

Emirates to restart daily flights to Abidjan

<http://news.cheapflighthouse.co.uk/2010/04/21/emirates-to-restart-daily-flights-to-abidjan/>

Emirates is to restart daily flights to the **Cote D'Ivoire** from 1st May 2010, following increased demand for the West African route. Under the new schedule, EK flight 787 will leave Dubai each day at 0730hrs and arrive at Felix Houphouet Boigny Airport in Abidjan at 1400hrs. As before, flights to and from Abidjan, served by a 3-class Airbus A340-300, will make a quick stop in Accra, Ghana. The **Cote d'Ivoire**, which has Guinea, Mali and Ghana amongst its neighbours, is one of the world's major producers and exporters of cocoa beans, coffee and palm oil. Abidjan is also a large commercial sea port, forming a gateway for the industrial world to and from Western Africa. Emirates, supported by Emirates Sky Cargo, has been flying to the African continent since 1986, the year after the airline was established. Last year, Emirates launched two new African routes – to Durban and Luanda, plus a second daily service to Lagos and an extra weekly flight to Nairobi. In just under 25 years, Emirates has quickly grown into a major player on the aviation stage, boasting a 145-strong modern fleet, the world's largest A380 order book and a six continent route network.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone Discloses Mining Revenues for First Time

<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/africa/west/Sierra-Leone-Discloses-Mining-Revenues-for-First-Time-91707319.html>

Two years after **Sierra Leone** signed up to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, the government has submitted their first report on mining revenues. **Sierra Leone** is rich in mineral resources and also one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Now the government is trying to address its 'resource curse' by publishing its first ever public report on revenue **Sierra Leone** receives from mining companies. The report is part of the global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative that requires mining companies to publish what they pay and asks governments to publish what they receive in revenue. The idea is to foster transparency in a sector that, if managed properly, could contribute significantly to a country's development. **Sierra Leone** Ministry of Mines Deputy Secretary Emmanuel Komba says the report is an important step for a country that has gained little from its mineral wealth. The report covers payments made to the government by six industrial mining companies, two major exporters and other institutions during 2006 and 2007. Mining companies reportedly paid \$10.6 million in 2007 while the government says it received \$10.2 million in the same year. Verdi Consulting, the company reconciling the two sides, says the discrepancy is due to the government failing to report some revenue and to companies unable to prove certain payments.

Sacked minister faces fresh corruption charges

<http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20100420-sacked-minister-faces-fresh-corruption-charges>

Anti-corruption prosecutors in **Sierra Leone** have opened fresh charges against former Fisheries Minister Haja Afsatu Kabba. The sacked minister is accused of misappropriation of public funds and abuse of office. Scores of supporters, some dressed in their red party colours, filled the courtroom as Kabba made her second appearance before an anti-corruption judge. Prosecutor Calvin Matsebo brought out seven new charges, much to the surprise of the defence lawyers. The fresh charges claim that the former minister misappropriated 310 million Leones - nearly 60 thousand euros - and she abused her office by employing her sons without having them go through the proper hiring procedures. But what shocked the defence lawyers most was that the prosecutor asked that the initial 17-count indictment, released some six weeks ago, be suspended while the new charges are tried. The trial judge Justice Nicolas Browne Marke granted the suspension. Outside the courtroom, lead defence lawyer Blyden Jenkins Johnston told reporters that he suspected mischief.

Mercy Ships Announces Sierra Leone Field Service

<http://www.bio-medicine.org/medicine-news-1/Mercy-Ships-Announces-Sierra-Leone-Field-Service-70797-1/>

Garden Valley, TX (Vocus) April 20, 2010 -- Mercy Ships has selected **Sierra Leone** as the site for the 2011 Field Service for the world's largest charity hospital ship, the Africa mercy. This will be the fourth time that Mercy Ships has delivered free world-class medical care to the impoverished West African nation. The protocols and Memoranda of Understanding were recently signed. The **Sierra Leone** government was represented by The Honourable Vice President, Sam-Sumana, and Mercy Ships was represented by Mr. Don Stephens, Founder and President. The agreement provides the necessary collaboration with the **Sierra Leone** government in regard to the port, security, water and sanitation. It also opens the door for the mercy ships Advance Team to do the preliminary work necessary for the upcoming Field Service. Health care in **Sierra Leone** is unaffordable and often unavailable. The country ranks 180 out of 182 nations on the 2009 Human Development Index, and the majority of the population lives on less than \$2 per day. Infant mortality in **Sierra Leone** is 159 per 1000 births as compared to the USA at 6.3 per 1000 births. Dental care is another illustration of the conditions within the country, with one dentist for every one million people and 6,000 dentists per million people in the USA.

New York Times
Wednesday, 22 April 2010

ICC Prosecutor Seeks Ruling Against Sudan Over Warrants

By REUTERS

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - The International Criminal Court prosecutor has requested that ICC judges issue a finding of non-cooperation against Sudan's government for failing to execute two arrest warrants.

In a document seen by Reuters Thursday, the prosecutor said the filing followed Sudan's continual lack of cooperation in the case against Ahmad Harun and Ali Kushayb, both of whom are wanted for war crimes and crime against humanity.

It is the first time that the ICC prosecutor has requested judges to issue a finding of non-compliance.

(Reporting by Aaron Gray-Block and Ben Berkowitz; Editing by Sonya Hepinstall)

Nairobi Star (Nairobi)

Wednesday, 21 April 2010

Kenya: Ocampo Witnesses Fear Leak

Nairobi — THE credibility of Kenya National Commission on Human Rights has been rocked after witnesses accused a commissioner of leaking their identities and safe houses to suspects targeted by the International Criminal Court.

A commissioner (name withheld) has allegedly met post-election violence suspects to share information about the identities, locations, and safe houses of witnesses, according to letters of complaint to KNCHR and a witness the Star personally met yesterday.

Late last year the Star revealed several cases of Waki witnesses suffering intimidation by post-election violence suspects. In January, the Star reported that the wife of a potential ICC witness had been sent Sh3,000 with instructions to buy a coffin for her husband.

Witnesses are apparently losing confidence as the complaints were lodged in January but KNCHR has been unable to plug the leak.

Yesterday, KNCHR Vice-chairperson Hassan Omar confirmed witnesses have complained.

Omar said despite the discontent of the witnesses, the KNCHR would give the ICC all the support it seeks either collectively or individually.

"I wish to acknowledge that the KNCHR was made aware of allegations against one of our commissioners sometime last year. That the said commissioner is alleged to have compromised the safety and security of witnesses to the Waki Commission and that of KNCHR," stated Omar.

"Owing to the gravity of the complaint, I requested commissioners Anne Munyiva Ngugi, Wambui Kimathi and the Secretary to the Commission Mohammed Hallo who were at that point within reach to join me while receiving the complaint. Subsequent to this, we sent an investigation team to Eldoret between the 8th to 13th of January, 2010 to make a full assessment of the threats to the witnesses. Similar allegations were documented from those interviewed and are captured in the report of this investigation".

"Rather than address the issues at hand the commissioner has since alleged that two commissioners 'are pushing for a tribunal to remove him' and that I have been to the several diplomatic missions 'accusing' him of compromising the safety and security of witnesses. I have since left the matter to the Chairperson (Florence Simbiri-Jaoko) who I understanding has formally submitted a written complaint to the said commissioner for his response." Last month, the International Criminal Court gave the formal go-ahead for Chief Prosecutor Moreno Ocampo to investigate the violence surrounding the December 2007 elections. He promised to visit Kenya in May to meet victims and his situation analysis team was here two weeks ago in preparation.

ICC judges relied heavily on the reports of KNCHR and Justice Waki in giving Ocampo the go-ahead to investigate.

One witness wrote to the KNCHR chairperson Florence Simbiri-Jaoko on January 7, 2010 stating that the commissioner had met suspects at Sirikwa Hotel and Highlands Hotel in Eldoret on January 5, 2010.

"We feel worried when we see some senior officials of KNCHR meet some of the people behind and adversely mentioned in connection with post election violence of 2007... Commissioner (name withheld)

met the following people known to me and I strongly believe they played key roles in the violence," the witness said in the letter.

"At some point we had reason to believe that among the commission employees there were people who were leaking information to the mentioned persons and giving them specific details on the hotel, the witnesses testified and respective dates and various dates we visited KNCHR," states the letter.

"The commission should protect the confidence the people of Kenya still confer on them and make sure that key witness information is kept secret," states the letter.

The Eldoret based Centre for Human Rights and Democracy has also written to the KNCHR expressing concern that witnesses are losing trust in the commission.

"Currently, there seem to be some problem. KNCHR while in the North Rift last week asked some of the witnesses to write down all their details and send them to the national commission. The witnesses have written and refused to take them to KNCHR citing safety and security reasons," states centre director Ken Wafula.

"They say some people at the national commission have been leaking information to the suspects and therefore putting them in greater danger," said Wafula in his letter of January 18.

Relevant Links

"Witness protection is a delicate matter. It is a process that requires trust and confidence from witnesses. Where trust is eroded or shaky, the process buckles. The fears raised by witnesses are valid and genuine," states Wafula.

Yesterday, Hassan said the KNCHR visited Eldoret early this year after they learned that potential witnesses were worried about leaks.

"I was made aware of the hesitation by witnesses to seek the protection of the KNCHR. Therefore most of the witnesses on board are those I have given my personal commitment towards their safety and security and assured them of utmost confidentiality and professionalism in the matter. A colleague commissioner and I handle this process and information is only shared on a 'need to know' basis. I am confident that all reasonable care has been taken to ensure that there is no leakage of information or the safety and security of these witnesses jeopardized," stated Omar.

Naharnet

Wednesday, 21 April 2010

Report: International Tribunal Courtroom Ready in May, No Funding Problems



The Special Tribunal for Lebanon's courtroom will be operational end of next month to try those involved in ex-Premier Rafik Hariri's assassination, sources following up the court's operations told al-Liwaa daily.

However, a date hasn't been set yet for the start of the trials, they said.

On the latest accusations of Zuhair Siddiq, a former Syrian spy accused of misleading the U.N. probe in Hariri's murder, the sources quoted international circles as saying that Siddiq's statements were part of the campaign against the STL whose rules and regulations call for punishing witnesses who make false testimonies.

About reports that efforts are underway to obstruct the funding of the court, the sources said such rumors are also part of the campaign to hinder the tribunal's operations.

The \$55 million budget for this year is available and contacts are underway with donor nations to provide funding for the 2011 budget, the sources told al-Liwaa.

They expected the STL to remain silent about rumors and accusations about its integrity.

The Standard (Kenya)

Wednesday, 21 April 2010

AG, Saitoti: Point for us Kabuga and we arrest him

By CYRUS OMBATI

Is Felicien Kabuga in Kenya? That is a question that has been coming back for more than ten years. And it could earn you Sh400 million the US has placed as a reward for anyone reporting Kabuga's whereabouts.

The US Government and the tribunal trying Rwanda genocide suspects in Arusha want the world to believe one of the most wanted men in connection with the massacre is hiding in Kenya.

The Kenya Government has on many occasions said the country was not harbouring Kabuga but claims he is holed up somewhere within Kenya's borders seem not to end.

On Wednesday, six Cabinet Ministers accompanied by the country's spy chief said the latest claim made by the US government and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) that Kabuga was living within Kenya was not true.

Ministers George Saitoti (Internal Security) Mutula Kilonzo (Justice), James Orengo (Lands), Otieno Kajwang (Immigration), Moses Wetang'ula (Foreign Affairs) and Attorney General Amos Wako said Kenya would gain nothing by hiding Kabuga.

The Director General of the National Security Intelligence Services (NSIS) Michael Gichangi and Internal security PS Francis Kimemia also attended the briefing.

"We are equally baffled as to why the ICTR and the US government keep on claiming that Kabuga is here. The reason they give is that immigration records show he entered here but no proof he left but that does not hold water because if you have an international warrant of arrest you cannot go to say (tell your pursuers) you are leaving," said Wako.

Saitoti who read a statement signed by all the ministers said Kenya has utilised immense resources in the form of material, equipment and personnel to assist ICTR with its investigations.

US Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes, Mr Stephen Rapp, had two months ago said his office has intelligence reports confirming that the alleged financier of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi is in Kenya.

The ICTR too has insisted Kabuga is still in Kenya despite denials by the government.

In the 1994 the Hutu-dominated Rwanda government killed thousands of Tutsi's and Hutu political moderates. In the course of 100 days, at least 500,000 people were killed. The mass killings erupted after the death of then president of Rwanda Juvenal Habyarimana after the plane he was flying in was shot down.

Yesterday, the ministers said since 2002 Kenya formed a joint security team involving security agencies, ICTR and FBI to try and apprehend Kabuga who was alleged to be hiding in Kenya.

They added police have been acting on intelligence of alleged sighting of Kabuga in various parts of the country but these were found to be untrue.

"In response to numerous information, several people were arrested but were subsequently released on realising they were not Mr Kabuga," said Saitoti.

He added Kenya formed another team in 2007 to track down Kabuga and his properties and bank accounts and those of his associates in the country.

The minister said Kenya had frozen bank accounts linked to Kabuga's wife Josephine and Mukezitoni and had the rent collected from her villas deposited with the Registrar of the High Court.

"Other information that Kabuga also owns properties in Pioneer, Uhuru, Donholm, Kileleshwa estates in Nairobi and others in Isinya, Kitale, Namanga, Eldoret, Mtwapa and Narok was investigated and found to be untrue and the full particulars are within the knowledge of the Tribunal," he added.

The ministers added that the joint investigation team is still operational ready to act on any leads on the whereabouts of the fugitive.

It is not clear why the ministers decided to hold the press conference yesterday together long after the ICTR lodged a case at the UN Security Council demanding sanctions against Kenya after the US government made the claims.

ICTR accused Kenya of not complying with international legal obligations to arrest and surrender international fugitives. The US circulated a picture of Kabuga last month, which it termed as genuine.

Kabuga is accused of bankrolling and participating in the Rwanda genocide.

The ICTR issued an international arrest warrant for him in 1999 charging him with 11 counts including genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide and complicity to commit genocide.

In June 1994 after the Rwanda Patriotic Front led by current President Paul Kagame overran Rwanda, Kabuga fled the country. He first attempted to enter Switzerland but was ordered to leave.

He went on to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Reports later emerged that he was in Kenya and it was widely believed he had large business interests in the country.

Kenya has continuously dismissed claims about the fugitive's presence in the country.