

**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

as at:

Friday, 7 May 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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The Exclusive
Friday, 7 May 2010

Johnny Paul Saved Salone

Tomorrow, the 8th of May marked the day the Parliamentarians and the civil society organised a peace march to the residence of the former leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the late Foday Saybana Sankoh as a way of telling him that enough was enough.

The peaceful March which commenced at the Victoria Park, central of the capital ended bloody at Sankoh's residence at Spur Road.

On that very day, the only royal armed group that joined defenceless civilians in the march was the one led by the former leader of

the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), Major Johnny Paul Koroma. In a short combat pant and sleeveless top with a pistol in his right hand and the Holy Bible in the left, chanting gospel songs, the AFRC leader and now, Special Court indictee and war crime fugitive (dead or alive) led his well armed men up Spur Road.

It could be recalled that with the assistance of the international community, President Kabbah and RUF leader, Sankoh negotiated the Lomé Peace Accord, which was signed on 7 July 1999. The accord made

provision for late Sankoh to be elevated to Chairman for Strategic Mineral Resources and was given a Vice President status. Other RUF members were also offered top positions in the Kabbah administration. Almost immediately, however, the RUF began to violate the agreement, most notably by holding hundreds of UNAMSIL personnel hostage and capturing their arms and ammunition in the first half of 2000.

The violation of the peace accord by the RUF led to May 8, 2000 demonstration which left 20 defenceless civilians killed

by the RUF outside Sankoh's resident at Spur Road.

During the shutout, Johnny Paul and his men, together with UNAMSIL and ECOMOG Personnel fired back sporadically and as a result, drove the enemies who escaped into the bushes. Sankoh and other senior members of the RUF were later arrested and the group was stripped of its positions in government.

Since the May 8th of 2000, this day has become symbolic as a day when the people of Sierra Leone were mobilized to confront a common enemy, which was the RUF.

Though the day has not yet been declared a national day of reflection, many Sierra Leoneans still regard it as symbolic of democracy triumphing over tyranny. Whether tomorrow would be solemn or not the major players of the May 8th of 2000 drama are either no more or out of power. Corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh of the RUF and Major Johnny Paul Koroma are now dead while Ahmad Tejan Kabbah is now an "ex" President.

Notwithstanding this, a youth advocacy group called "Youth Arise!!" has decided to commemorate May 8th not as a political

event but giving it an environmental slant by launching a campaign aimed at preventing a further destruction of the green vegetation on the hills overlooking Freetown. Green May 8 is how this symbolic day has dubbed by Youth Arise!!

According to the National President of Youth Arise, Ahmed Jalloh, they are calling on Sierra Leoneans to confront the issue of deforestation just as they confronted Foday Sankoh and his cohorts on May 8 2000. "Our mountains have become Leprosy Mountains, stated Youth Arise's Guru, Oswald Hanciles.

Togolese delegation visits ICTR headquarters

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania - Togo's Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration Minister, Koffi Esaw, has completed a two-day familiarization visit to the Tanzania-based International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), expressing interest in learning more from the Tribunal's experience and best practices.

Esaw was accompanied by his Secretary-General, Kokou Kpayedo, and a technical adviser in the Ministry of Cooperation and Urban Planning, Kwamee Okoua.

In a brief Wednesday, ICTR said the purpose of the visit was "to familiarize the delegation with the operations and resources of the Tribunal and to learn from the ICTR's multi-faceted

achievements and challenges within the framework of its completion strategy".

The delegation held meetings with key principals of the ICTR, including the Tribunal President, Judge Dennis Byron, Acting Chief of Judicial and Legal Services Division, Pascal Besnier, and ICTR spokesperson, Roland Amoussouga.

Meanwhile, the ICTR officials have commended the cooperation demonstrated by Togo in the arrest of two genocide suspects on its territory and in the transfer of witnesses to the seat of the Tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania, for the purpose of testifying.

Charlestaylortrial.org (The Hague)

Thursday, 6 May 2010

NPFL Rebels Did Not Mistreat Civilians in State, Witness Says

Alpha Sesay

Reports that Liberian rebel forces loyal to Charles Taylor mistreated civilians during the country's civil conflict are wrong, said a defense witness for the former Liberian president today at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Karnah Eward Mineh, a former Liberian rebel commander, said his country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report, released in December 2009, incorrectly attributed the highest number of crimes during Liberia's civil conflict to Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group. Instead, the NPFL treated civilians well in the areas it controlled, and other fighting factions could have been responsible for atrocities attributed to the rebel group, Mr. Mineh said today.

"Yes, we saved the civilians, we welcomed them to our controlled area," Mr. Mineh said.

"The records of abuses by the NPFL were really very high during the period that they reigned as a revolutionary group, isn't that so?" prosecution lawyer, Mohamed Bangura asked the witness, referencing the Liberian TRC report.

"No, it never happened," the witness responded. "If it did happen, I cannot remember. There were several groups so I cannot give account of all of the groups."

Special Court for Sierra Leone

Prosecutors argue that Mr. Taylor condoned crimes committed by his rebel group in Liberia. Similarly, they argue, Mr. Taylor knew and approved of atrocities committed by Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels – a group which Mr. Taylor is on trial for allegedly supporting during Sierra Leone's 11 years civil conflict. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

Mr. Mineh also denied reports that Mr. Taylor executed his own NPFL commanders who opposed his reign as NPFL leader. Anthony Menkunagbe, Oliver Varney, Sam Lato and Degbeyee Debon were executed without due process, prosecutors say. Mr. Taylor has denied these claims, saying that these NPFL members conspired to commit treason, were investigated, tried and sentenced to be executed according to the code of military conduct. Today, Mr. Mineh corroborated Mr. Taylor's account.

Relevant Links

"They executed them. After they have investigated them and found guilty, then the tribunal chairman gave an order. He said because they plotted, because they wanted to do evil, so after they were found guilty, they executed them," Mr. Mineh explained.

Mr. Mineh, who has been testifying in a Liberian traditional language Gio with the use of English translators, finished his testimony today. Defense lawyers indicated they were not prepared to present another witness and would need an adjournment until Thursday when the next witness would be able to testify. The judges granted the defense request.

No proceedings will take place tomorrow and the trial of Mr. Taylor will resume Thursday.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Thursday, 6 May 2010

Charles Taylor Liberated Nimba County From Samuel Doe, Former Soldier Testifies

Daily Summary

By Alpha Sesay

In an effort to bolster Charles Taylor's defense argument that he was a peacemaker who wanted the best for the Liberia people, today's witness said Mr. Taylor strove to liberate the people of Nimba County in Liberia after they had been persecuted by then Liberian president Samuel K. Doe.

Today's witness — Teman Edward Zammy, a Liberian national formerly of the Armed Forces of Liberia – focused on issues that precipitated the Liberian civil war in 1989. He discussed how former Liberian president Doe allegedly massacred over 300 people, including children from Gio and Mano ethnic groups, after the infamous “Nimba Raid” of 1983.

The Nimba Raid involved unknown gunmen, allegedly from the Gio ethnic clan, who attacked Yekepa, a lucrative mining town in Nimba County. During the raid, the gunmen reportedly killed Charles Julu, a member of the Krahn ethnic group who was at the time commander of the Plant Protection Department the Liberian-American Mining Company called LAMCO.

In response, the President Doe and his Krahn countrymen in the Armed Forces of Liberia attacked the citizens of Nimba County, killing hundreds of people, including children who were perceived to be members of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups, Mr. Zammy told the Special Court for Sierra Leone today.

“They killed one of the kingsman who was the only geologist from the Nimbanian side that was working with the company-one D.K Onselly. He was a Gio man,” Mr. Zammy said.

“And they arrested so many others. They arrested a lot of people along with 300 Nimba children, from seven years down to babies. They brought them to town and they took them to Sheffling. They killed them and dumped them in a hole.”

Mr. Taylor's one time friend and former Commanding General of the Liberian Armed Forces, Thomas Quiwonkpa, staged a failed coup against then president Doe two years later, in 1985 (only days after Mr. Taylor's own mysterious escape from a US prison). After this coup, former president Doe set up a death squad which selectively rounded up and executed citizens of Nimba County in the Liberian armed forces.

Mr. Zammy told the court that the people of Nimba County were highly vulnerable when Mr. Taylor went to Liberia to rescue them in 1989. He explained that along with 168 men from Nimba County, Mr. Zammy was recruited and taken to Libya for military training, where Mr. Taylor promised them that he would liberate Nimba County and give freedom to its citizens.

“He told us, ‘Gentlemen, I have heard your cries, I have heard the cries of Nimba County, my wife is from Nimba County, Quiwonkpa was my friend from Nimba County, Quiwonkpa never listened to my advice. That was why he took untrained people to Liberia to Doe,’ the witness quoted Mr. Taylor as saying to them in Libya.

“From today, I am your leader, you call me Mr. Charles G. Taylor, I am your brother-in-law. I will lead you to Liberia to make a change,” the witness further recalled Mr. Taylor telling the group in Libya.

As Mr. Taylor invaded Liberia with his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebels in 1989, he received huge support and many recruits from Nimba County, Mr. Zammy said. They saw Mr. Taylor as the man who liberated them, the witness told the court.

Testimony today was not directly related to the core allegations against Mr. Taylor for his alleged role in crimes committed by Sierra Leonean rebels during his neighboring country's brutal 11-year civil war. The testimony does, however, link in with Mr. Taylor's broader defense argument that he was a man of peace who wanted the best for Liberia and for his fellow Sierra Leoneans, and not a war monger who benefitted from the two countries' material wealth through terrorizing civilians and supporting rebel crimes.

Mr. Zammy's testimony continues tomorrow.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 6 May 2010

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

UN News in Liberia

Midwives Shortage Kills Many Women, Babies Here - UNFPA Boss Raises Alarm

[In Profile Daily, Daily Observer, The News, The Informer]

- Midwives in Liberia yesterday joined millions of their counterparts around the world to observe International Day of Midwives, with the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) calling on the Liberian government to urgently address the shortage of midwives in the country.
- UNFPA Resident Representative to Liberia, Ms. Esperance Fundira, said women in Liberia continue to die every day due to pregnancy related complications.
- Ms. Fundira delivering the keynote address said “maternal mortality ratio is at 994 per 100,000 live births, while skilled birth attendance is at only 46 percent and antenatal coverage at 79 percent.
- The UNFPA boss also indicated that Liberian women suffer from long debilitating problem of obstetric fistula.
- The theme of this year’s International Day of Midwives was “The World Needs Midwives Now More Than Ever”, which Ms. Fundira localized as “Liberia Needs More Midwives Now More than Ever” as topic of her address.

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

UNDP Country Director Impressed With MDG Project

- The Country Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Liberia says there are better prospects for the millennium village project in Kokoyah Statutory District, Bong County.
- Mr. Dominic Sam said he was impressed with the level of progress made in the implementation of the project despite initial challenges.
- Mr. Sam encouraged residents of Kokoyah to play a leading role in the actualization of the project which seeks to alleviate poverty and extreme hunger.
- He reaffirmed the UNDP’s commitment of providing the required support to the millennium village project to meet its full benchmark.
- The UNDP Country Director spoke Tuesday in Kokoyah District, Bong County during an acquaintance tour accompanied by FAO Resident Representative Dr. Winfred Hammon.

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

UNDP Donates 15 Motorbikes to LNP

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has presented 15 Honda motorbikes to the Liberia National Police (LNP) to enhance their operations in the area of community services.
- Making the donation Wednesday, the UNDP procurement assistant, Albert Boima said there are additional six customs-made motorbikes on the way for the Police.
- Mr. Boima said UNDP made the donation under the UN Peace Building Fund for Community Policing at the total cost of US\$83,000.
- He said the UNDP is fully aware of the Police logistical limitation in their operations and will do every thing to capacitate the Police.
- Receiving the motorbikes, Deputy Police Director for Administration, Samuel Darkina said the UNDP donation was a worthy cause to the Police operations in crimes prevention.

Local News on Liberian issues

President Sirleaf Submits Budget Of Over US\$347M

[Front Page Africa, New Democrat, The News, National Chronicle, The Informer, The Analyst]

- President Ellen Johnson has submitted the draft fiscal budget for 2010 - 2011 to the National Legislature.
- Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan said the proposed fiscal budget is in the tune of a little over US\$347 million.
- According to Minister Ngafuan, revenue sources in the budget will come from tax income, non-tax revenue, grants and prior revenue from the last and current fiscal year.
- He disclosed government expects to raise over US\$230 million from tax revenue, more than US\$52 million of which will come from non-tax revenue.
- The Finance Minister also said US\$59 million of the over US\$230 million will come mainly from bilateral grants.
- Minister Ngafuan further revealed the Ministry of Public Works leads the allocation for spending entities with US\$28.7 million followed by the Ministries of Education and Health with US\$28.2 million and US\$21.1 million respectively.
- The Finance Minister disclosed there will also be an increase in civil servants salary due to the massive reduction in income and corporate taxes on the revenue side of the budget.

US Government Justifies Non-budgetary Support to Liberia

[Front Page Africa, The News, National Chronicle]

- The US government has for the first time commented on why it is not providing direct budgetary support to the Liberian government.
- USAID Mission Director said the US government does not provide direct budgetary support to Liberia because of lack of specifics on the usage of the funds.
- Ms. Pamela White said the US government is interested in the specific areas its money would be applied noting that US was also interested in seeing specific impact of its funds on the people as a mark of accountability.
- The US government official disclosed the Obama Administration was more interested in helping developing countries, like Liberia.
- Ms. White spoke Wednesday when she held a roundtable with a team of journalists at the US Embassy in Monrovia.
- During the gathering, she confirmed a US\$6.6 million support to the health and education sectors of the country.
- The USAID Mission Director however warned of serious consequences if the funds are not properly utilized.

Liberia Named 'Fastest Reformer' in HIPC Initiative

[Heritage, The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst]

- The international community has named Liberia as the fastest reformer in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC).
- Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan said Liberia will reach the HIPC Completion Point in June of this year.
- Minister Ngafuan said the confirmation was made during meetings he held in the United States with officials of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the US Treasury Department.
- The Finance Minister said he used the opportunity provided by the meetings to discuss the bilateral and multilateral agencies' development portfolios in Liberia and their engagements in the country.
- Minister Ngafuan at the head of a government delegation attended the spring meetings of the World Bank and the IMF in Washington, DC.

LNP Sends 3 Nigerians, Other to Court for Alleged Conspiracy to Kidnap American Bishop

[In Profile Daily]

- The Liberia National Police has sent to court three Nigerians and a Liberian for their alleged conspiracy to kidnap an American Bishop for a ransom of US\$2 million.
- Police spokesman George Bardue said suspects Peter Agba, Richard Ekperonh, Okechi Ihezue and Alfred Foewe were arrested with a pistol while trying to execute their plan.
- Mr. Bardue said the suspects will be prosecuted before the Monrovia City Court for charges ranging from criminal conspiracy, attempt to kidnap and illegal possession of firearm.
- According to the Police spokesman the suspects held several secret meetings at their Thinker's Village residence for the kidnap of Bishop Rosetta Cox of the Rock Church in Margibi County.
- He said the suspects admitted to the plan to kidnap the American Bishop but said others linked to the plan are still at large.

NEC Fires Back At LDI Boss

[The Inquirer, The Analyst, Front Page Africa, New Democrat]

- The National Elections Commission (NEC) says its attention has been drawn to a barrage of false claims by the executive director of the Liberia Democratic Institute (LDI).
- The NEC said the issue raised by Mr. Dan Saryee on the accreditation of community-based and civil society organizations is totally out of place.
- A NEC release issued Wednesday argued that Mr. Saryee's contention is based on mere speculation and misconception.
- The issue relates to accreditation of community-based and civil society organizations desirous of engaging in civic and voter education for the 2011 elections.
- NEC described Mr. Saryee's claim as a grand design to cast dark shadows over the pending electoral process through the dissemination of fallacies and half-truths.

House To Repeal Certified Public Accountant Act

[Daily Observer]

- The House of Representatives is poised to repeal the 1933 Act of the Liberia Institute of Certified Public Accountants (LICPA) Limited of Liberia.
- The Act which guides the workings of accounting in Liberia and educates individuals in such areas was submitted to the House a few weeks ago by the Liberian government through the Institute.
- On Tuesday, the House Standing Committee on Ways, Means and Finance called a major public hearing with financial experts and internationally recognized accountants to discuss the Act.
- The discussion brought together several officials from the University of Liberia, Ministry of Finance, General Auditing Commission and other auditing institutions among others.
- The Act, when repealed will promulgate standards and rules of general and specific application to accounting and auditing in Liberia that are appropriate for the private sector.

LMA Bill Saddles in Confusion

[The News]

- Opposing parties in the Liberia Marketing Association (LMA) have verbally clashed in a public hearing at the House of Representatives.
- In the clash, the LMA conflicting parties disagreed on the passage of a bill seeking to amend the Act that created the Association.
- LMA Secretary General Dahn Sherman said it was important to pass the bill into law which is currently before the House.
- Mr. Sherman argued the current LMA Act has legal faults because the Association is being subjected to people claiming to be founders.
- However, the group of founders of the LMA called on the House not to pass the bill because they have no input in the document.
- A spokesman of the LMA founders Albert Peters also told the hearing the bill should not be passed because the LMA leadership is currently under corruption investigation.

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

President Sirleaf Submits Budget Of Over US\$347M

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

US Government Justifies Non-budgetary Support to Liberia

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

Former Assistant Information Minister Trapped In Fire

- Reports say former Assistant Information Minister for Public Affairs Jeff Mutada has been rushed to hospital following a fire incident at his home.
- Fire reportedly gutted Mr. Mutada's four-bed room house in Barnesville Wednesday evening burning it to ashes.
- Following the incident, Mr. Mutada was rushed to the John F. Kennedy Medical Centre in Sinkor.
- The cause of the fire is yet to be established.

LMA Bill Saddles in Confusion

NEC Fires Back At LDI Boss

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

JPC Wants Government Prosecute GAC Audit Indictees

- The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) is calling on the Liberian government to start the prosecution of people indicted in the audit report of the General Auditing Commission (GAC).
- But the JPC wants the government prosecution of indicted persons in the GAC audit report to be based on overriding and convincing evidence.
- The JPC national executive director, Cllr. Augustine Toe said by doing so people accused of stealing public funds by the GAC report will have their day in court to prove their innocence or guilt.
- The JPC says while it welcomes efforts so far by government in prosecuting people indicted for corruption by the GAC audit report, it preys that the process would be done in honesty and under the due process of law.
- The Catholic rights group is warning that the culture of impunity is continuing under the Unity Party-led government a major factor for the endemic form of corruption found in all sectors of the Liberian society.
- Cllr. Toe said if government is serious in its fight against corruption, the former managing director of the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC), Harry Greaves must be made to give full disclosure of the oil deal signed between the LPRC and the Nigerian oil company, Zakhem.

Liberia Named 'Fastest Reformer' in HIPC Initiative

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

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LNP Sends 3 Nigerians, Other to Court for Alleged Conspiracy to Kidnap American Bishop

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian to hang for drug trafficking in Malaysia

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/05/06/liberian-hang-drug-trafficking-malaysia.html>

A **Liberian** on death row for drug trafficking has lost his final appeal in Malaysia's top court. Prosecutor Nurulhuda Nuraini Mohamed Nor says the Federal Court upheld Nobies ah Ezike's conviction Wednesday. The judges unanimously found that the prosecution proved its case based on witness statements and documents. The prosecutor said Thursday that Ezike was convicted in 2005. The businessman was arrested in 1996 after sending a package containing heroin to the United States when he was in Malaysia. A date for his execution hasn't been set. The death penalty is mandatory for drug trafficking convictions in Malaysia.

U.S. Marine Making a Difference in Liberia - U.S. Marine Forces Africa

http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=news/news_show.php&id=49205

Stuttgart, Germany -- U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sergeant Gary Morris' time in Liberia, which originally began as a voluntary six-month assignment, will end in August 2010, 20 months later. The U.S. military has been providing mentors and advisors to Liberia's security sector reform initiative since 2006, a U.S. State Department-led initiative that has completely rebuilt the military in Liberia, screening tens of thousands of applicants for a 2,000 member force. A reservist, Morris was serving as a platoon leader in an antiterrorism unit in Billings, Montana, when he decided to accept the assignment as a military advisor in Liberia. Morris arrived in Liberia in January 2009, where for six months he served as a mentor to the 2nd Battalion of the newly formed 23rd Infantry Brigade of the Armed Forces of Liberia. He returned home to Dallas only to receive a call shortly afterward asking if he would come back to Liberia. Having found his work in Liberia rewarding, Morris agreed to return. He served another two months as a mentor, after which he moved to U.S. Africa Command's Office of Security Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia. In the OSC, he works as the Liberia Defense Sector Reform liaison and assists all U.S. military personnel in Liberia with logistical support.

Russian special forces storm oil tanker, arrest Somali pirates

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article7117736.ece>

Russian commandos dramatically rescued the crew of an oil tanker today that had been seized by pirates off the coast of Somalia. Special Forces marines stormed the Liberian-registered Moscow University and freed all 23 Russian crew members unharmed. One pirate was reported killed and ten others were arrested after a firefight during the dawn helicopter raid on the vessel, which is carrying 86,000 tonnes of oil worth \$52 million (£34 million). "During reconnaissance preceding the assault operation, the Russian sailors simultaneously used helicopters and

speedboats while Special Forces covertly approached the tanker,” an unidentified Russian navy official told the Ria-Novosti news agency. “The pirates on board the Moscow University tanker opened fire using small arms. One of them was shot during return fire.” Colonel Alexei Kuznetsov, a spokesman for the Russian Defence Ministry, said: “Nobody was hurt among the tanker crew and the Russian military. The pirates have been detained and are being held on board the Moscow University tanker.”

VOA

Thursday, 6 May 2010

Kenya's Await ICC Chief Prosecutor's Arrival

By Peter Clottey



International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo gives a press conference, 01 Apr 2010, in The Hague on a probe the ICC will carry out into crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the violent aftermath of Kenya's December 2007 presidential election.

Kenya's local media reports that the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno-Ocampo, is scheduled to arrive in the country this weekend to spearhead investigations into the 2007 post-

election violence.

Douglas Mutua, a journalist with the Nations Media group said Kenyans have been demanding justice since the end of the electoral violence that led to the loss of lives and properties.

"Moreno-Ocampo will be coming to Kenya on Saturday this week to see victims of the post-election violence and even people who think they are among the suspects," he said.

The chief prosecutor is scheduled to officially launch an inquiry into Kenya's post-election violence that led to the deaths of at least 1133 and displaced over 600,000 people.

The chief prosecutor has reportedly expressed the wish to have suspects of the post-election violence arrested next year ahead of their trial scheduled for 2012.

Mutua said Kenyans are eagerly awaiting the chief prosecutor's arrival.

"Generally, Kenyans are seeing a situation whereby they would be getting justice. Justice will be done because they already know that Moreno-Ocampo earlier announced that he had 20 suspects that he will be investigating. So, they are seeing a situation whereby the ICC has taken up this case seriously, and they are bound to benefit," Mutua said.

Kenya's government has so far agreed to cooperate with the ICC's chief prosecutor investigations into the electoral violence.

But, Mutua said government officials seem reluctant to comment on Moreno-Ocampo's arrival.

"The leadership is kind of scared because they are not discussing the issue in public. You know the main culprits here would be politicians and I believe that most of them fear a bit to talk so boldly about the statement Moreno-Ocampo is making because they may be suspects. No one has ruled out that the president and the prime minister will be suspects because whatever happened in this country in that period was because of the two," Mutua said.

The Washington Times

Friday, 7 May 2010

Obama keeps distance from tribunal

By Nicholas Kralev

A pushback from the military and a skeptical secretary of defense have dashed the hopes of some Obama administration officials for closer cooperation with a global war-crimes tribunal that some fear could prosecute American service members, current and former U.S. officials say.

Although the United States has rejoined the meetings of the International Criminal Court (ICC) member states after an eight-year absence, it has taken little new action to work more closely with the court.

In fact, many international legal analysts argue that there was a more significant change in U.S. policy toward the ICC from the first to the second term of President George W. Bush than there has been since President Obama took office last year.

"The administration has been very cautious and slow, and has not made dramatic changes in approach towards the ICC," said John B. Bellinger, the State Department's legal adviser under Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

"During a 10-month policy review last year, they made no changes in policy, and in November they announced rather tepidly that they would attend the assembly of state-parties ... as an observer, but emphasized that they had continuing concerns about the possibility of politicized prosecutions of Americans," he said.

President Clinton signed the ICC treaty in 2000 but made clear that he had no intention of submitting it to Congress for ratification. He had serious concerns about potential prosecution of U.S. officials and soldiers, after Washington's failure to amend the treaty to secure certain protections for Americans. Still, he wanted to send a message to the world that the United States believes in international justice.

The Bush administration later said that such messages had little meaning and "unsigned" the treaty in 2002. During its second term, the administration became much more supportive of the ICC and helped in its prosecution of Sudanese President Omar Bashir for crimes in Darfur.

"The Bush administration went too far during its first four years in distancing itself from and criticizing the ICC, which made the rest of the world think that the administration didn't support international justice," Mr. Bellinger said. "During the second term, we took a more pragmatic approach of offering to help the court's Darfur investigation, and the policy shifted significantly to one of selective engagement."

Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the ICC prosecutor, recently said that Mr. Bush pursued a "policy of constructive engagement" in his final years in office, "for which we are grateful."

When Mr. Obama won the 2008 election, many Democrats, including members of his administration, hoped he would rejoin the ICC statute and step up U.S. support and cooperation with the court. Some even thought he might try to ratify it. However, the president has done none of those things.

Capital News

Thursday, 6 May 2010

Kampala to host ICC meeting

BY JUDIE KABERIA

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is set to hold the 9th Session of the Assembly of States in Kampala, Uganda.

Director of the Secretariat Assembly of the States Parties of the ICC Renan Villacis on Wednesday said the conference which will start at the end of this month will see several amendments made to the Rome Statute and review of International Crimes and Justice.

“The Assembly decided that the review conference would be held from May 31 to June 11 for a period of ten working days to consider amendments to the Rome Statute and a stocktaking of international criminal justice,” he said.

The Rome Statute is the treaty adopted in 1998 during a conference where 160 States established an international criminal court.

The conference is scheduled to define the crime of aggression, the conditions for the exercise of jurisdiction by the court as well as draft elements of the crime.

Crime of aggression is one of the crimes within the ICC jurisdiction but State Parties are yet to define it and set conditions under which the court will exercise its jurisdiction.

Another amendment to the Rome Statute will be the inclusion of a proposal that if adopted will expand the list of banned weapons which will be included in the war crimes.

Consideration to delete an article (article 124 of the Rome Statute) that allows a new State Party to opt for exclusion from the court’s jurisdiction on war crimes allegedly committed by its nationals or on its territory for a period of seven years will be the third amendment to the Rome Statute.

Mr Villacis said in the matters of international criminal justice, the conference will assess matters level of cooperation by member states which has been a major challenge for the ICC especially in arresting suspects and carrying out investigations.

He said the topic will be handled by Costa Rica and Ireland.

South Africa and Denmark will focus on the principle of complementarity. Complementarity means that the court only intervenes when a state is unwilling to investigate and prosecute core international crimes genuinely.

Peace and justice will also be key topics and Argentina, Democratic Republic of Congo plus Switzerland will lead in the discussions.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon will open the high profile conference that will see top international personalities such as presidents, prime ministers, to name but just a few the likes of Thabo Mbeki, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and of course a powerful delegation from the ICC and other

international and national bodies.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni who will be the host is slotted to make remarks during the conference.

Out of the 111 member states, only 40 countries have so far registered for the review conference but Mr Villacis said more registrations were expected before the beginning of the conference. He however could not confirm if Kenya had registered.

Africa has the highest number of situations under investigations of the ICC and it is also the continent with a highest membership of 30 countries.

The review conference is held every year and the last one was held in November last year at The Hague.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 5 May 2010

Honduran truth commission starts work

By International Justice Desk



Tegucigalpa, Honduras

A truth and reconciliation commission on Tuesday launched an investigation into the

political unrest that shook Honduras last year. The former vice president of Guatemala, Eduardo Stein, is leading the commission. He says he believes he will be ready to present a report in eight months time.

In an interview with Radio Netherlands Worldwide, Mr Stein said several things that happened during the political crisis still needed to be cleared up. He said the commission was, "a fundamental step towards reconciling the people of Honduras". The Guatemalan politician said the commission's task was not to record the history of the recent events but "to discover why, over the course of the coming months, Honduras' democratic institutions failed to solve the political crisis".

On 28 June 2009, Honduras' left-wing president Manuel Zelaya was ousted by the army and replaced by an interim government. After months of wrangling, fresh elections were called and won by the current government under the leadership of President Porfirio Lobo. The international community is far from happy with the course of events and the new Honduran government has only been recognized by about 30 countries.

The new government hopes the establishment of the truth and reconciliation commission will improve its image in the eyes of the world. The coup d'etat and subsequent political unrest led to the suspension of Honduras from the Organisation of American States, but the organisation's chief, José Miguel Insulza, will intend the inaugural ceremony in Tegucigalpa.

Human rights activists are sceptical about the commission and have serious doubts about some of its members. They say that far too many of them are too loyal to the conservative faction in Honduras.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Thursday, 6 May 2010

Seychelles to set up courts to fight piracy



The Indian Ocean island nation of the Seychelles is to set up UN-backed courts to prosecute suspected pirates nabbed by European Union naval forces off Somalia, a UN statement said Wednesday.

The regional center for prosecution of suspected

pirates will be the second in the area, after one already established by Kenya.

The Vienna-based UN office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said the center would be used to receive piracy suspects caught by EU naval units for prosecutions on its court.

In March, the Seychelles began trying 11 pirates arrested by its coast guard with help from EU maritime patrol aircraft based in Seychelles.

The trial was conducted under a recently amended provision of the Seychelles criminal code that allows for the prosecution of piracy under universal jurisdiction.

Later the same week, eleven more pirates were transferred to the custody of the Seychelles authorities after they were by the French Navy off Somalia and flown to Seychelles via Djibouti.

Seychelles authorities have been working with the EU-UNODC counter-piracy program to ensure that the country's criminal justice system is ready for such trials.

Additional funding from Australia, Canada and Germany also made it possible to provide the police and coast guard of Seychelles with training in procedures for handing over evidence and suspects and to supply the coast guard with substantial navigation and tactical information gear.

Last month, the EU offered support to Kenya and the Seychelles to continue to judge and jail suspected Somali pirates, as Nairobi moved to cancel agreements on their prosecution.

EU nations are reluctant to try suspects captured by the naval force in busy shipping lanes in the Gulf of Aden but the bloc cannot send them to any country where they might face abuse or the death penalty.

Kenya, with the Seychelles the only littoral state that has agreed to take in suspects for prosecution, recently complained that the strain on its over-populated prisons and congested courts was too heavy.

Nairobi has formally announced that it wants to stop prosecuting suspected Somali pirates and cancel the agreements it has to that effect with several naval powers.

Kenya has memoranda of understanding with the European Union, United States, Canada, Denmark, China and Britain whereby it takes in suspects intercepted at sea and prosecutes them in courts in Mombasa.

The Seychelles in March agreed to take in suspects for prosecution but has an even more limited capacity and insists that convicted pirates be taken back to Somalia to serve their sentences.

The EU has also opened negotiations with five other countries in the region, including South Africa and Tanzania, in the hope of forging agreements on trying piracy suspects.

Last month, the UN Security Council passed a resolution urging all states to toughen legislation aimed at prosecuting and jailing pirates caught off Somalia.

An international armada of warships has patrolled an area in the north of Somalia in the Gulf of Aden for more than a year in a bid to curb rampant piracy.

But countries which have captured pirates have often had difficulty bringing them to justice because of legal technicalities.

(Source: AFA)