

**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:

Wednesday, 30 June 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Witness denies inducement by Special Court officials

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor's defense witness has denied prosecution suggestions that he received money from court officials as an incentive to testify before taking the witness stand on behalf of the former Liberian president in The Hague.

As the cross-examination of Mr. Taylor's 15th witness, "DCT-190", finished, prosecutors focused on payments made to him in connection with his appearance at the Special Court for Sierra Leone as a defense witness. The witness denied receiving money as an incentive for his testimony, telling the court instead that its 'Victims and Witness Section (VWS)' indeed provided some money for him - but that such money went towards medical services, transportation and accommodation. He did not physically see the money paid on his behalf.

"While being involved with the Charles Taylor

team, have you received any payment from the court?" prosecution counsel, Kathryn Howarth, asked the witness.

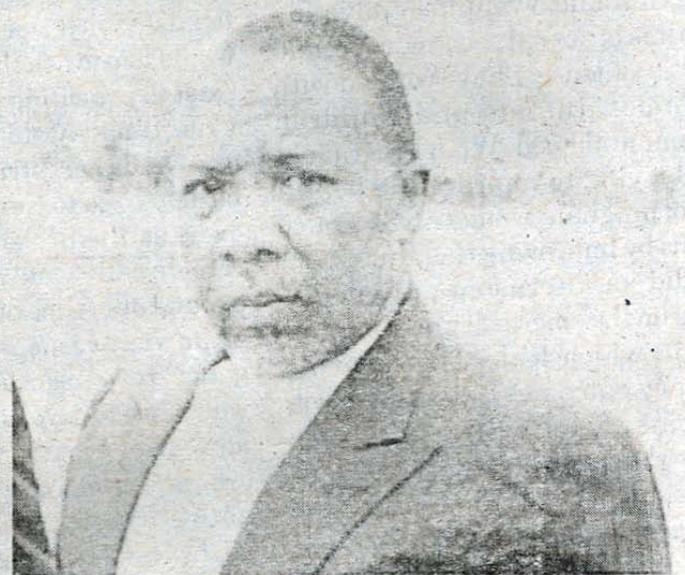
"No," he said.

Ms. Howarth asked the witness whether he had received an amount of 899,000 Leones (about USD \$230) for medical services.

"I had a tooth ache and was treated and my daughter was ill and taken care of but I don't know if it went up to that amount," he said.

Ms. Howarth put before the witness a WVS document titled "Expenses incurred on DTC-190," which itemized the amounts of money spent on the witness and the purposes for which said monies were disbursed.

"As I have told you, this is a figure that is shown but I was taken to the hospital and given treatment," the witness said when asked again about the 899,000 Leones.



The witness agreed that he received about 760,000 Leones (about USD \$200) to cover expenses relating to transportation from his work place in Sierra Leone's provinces to the country's capital. Ms. Howarth pressed the witness on the number of times he had travelled to Freetown and whether the amount was justified. The witness said he travelled to Freetown twice.

Ms. Howarth also pointed out that the witness received about

497,000 Leones (about USD \$130) for miscellaneous expenses and 250,000 Leones (about USD \$64) as attendance allowance.

While the witness said he did not know what the meaning of miscellaneous allowance was, he denied in clear terms that he had received money for an "attendance allowance."

"I am completely unaware of attendance allowance. Nobody has ever given me money for attendance allowance," he said.

Agence France Presse

Wednesday, 30 June 2010

War crimes prosecutors clear to call Naomi Campbell

THE HAGUE — Prosecutors can call supermodel Naomi Campbell and actress Mia Farrow to testify at the war crimes trial of Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor, a court said on Wednesday.

"The trial chamber hereby grants the motion" by prosecutors to be allowed to call the pair to the stand over a so-called blood diamond Taylor allegedly gave Campbell, said the decision by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary
29 June 2010**

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

UN News in Liberia

UNMIL was not reported in the news today.

Local News on Liberian issues

President Sirleaf Addresses Nation Today

[The Inquirer, Daily Observer, In Profile Daily, Front Page Africa, The News]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is expected to address the nation today, Tuesday.
- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said President Sirleaf will address issues surrounding Liberia reaching the HIPC Completion Point.
- Mr. Badio said the President Sirleaf will provide more details on the debt issue and unfolding developments in Washington regarding the implications for Liberia.
- According to him, the Liberian leader is optimistic that the World Bank will confirm the decision of the IMF regarding the country reaching the HIPC Completion Point.
- The World Bank will today review the debt clearance decision of the International Monetary Fund and would either concur or disagree.

President Sirleaf Makes Appointments in Government

[In Profile Daily]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has made several appointments in government pending confirmation by the Senate.
- Those appointed are: Mr. Levi Zemmah, Deputy Foreign Minister for Administration; Mr. John Bestman, Member, Board of Governors, Central Bank of Liberia; Ms. Ethel Davies, Ambassador to the Republic of Germany, and Dr. Kadiker Rex Dahn, Deputy Education Minister for Planning Research & Development.
- Others include Messrs Joseph Mayah, Managing Director, Liberia Electricity Corporation; Allen Kromah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Administration; and David Koleh, Deputy Legal Counsel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The President also named Mr. Lewis K. Wleh, Sr., Commissioner, Township of New Georgia, Montserrado County and Attorney Zaizay Forkpa, Stipendiary Magistrate, Bondiway Magisterial Court in Margibi County.

Government Bans Export of Wildlife, Bush Meat Products

[The Inquirer, National Chronicle, Heritage, Front Page Africa, The Informer, New Vision]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has by proclamation banned the export of wildlife and bush meat products from the country.
- A Foreign Ministry release says the ban shall remain enforced for the maximum period provided by law.
- The ban shall also remain effective pending the passage of a proposed legislation to be submitted to the Legislature.
- The release quotes President Sirleaf as advising everyone involved in what it calls the illegal trade within the borders to take note of the ban.
- According to the Liberian leader the ban is intended to help preserve the country's wildlife as certain species could become extinct if not protected.
- Government said cross-border trade involving wildlife contravenes both Liberia's Forestry Management laws and the international convention.
- The presidential proclamation is in consonance with the Act Adopting the National Forestry Reform Law of 2006 which deals with management of wildlife.

US Congressional Delegation Due in Liberia Sunday

[The Inquirer, Heritage]

- An eight-man US Congressional delegation is expected to pay a three-day official working visit to Liberia on Sunday 4 July 2010.
- The delegation headed by Congressman David Price will hold talks with high level government officials including President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Speaker Alex Tyler and Senate President Pro-tempore Cletus Wortorson.
- The American Congressional team while in the country will also visit the Firestone Rubber Plantation in Margibi County.
- Other members of the US Congressional delegation include Donald Payne of New Jersey, Allyson Schwartz of Pennsylvania, Keith Ellison of Minnesota and Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island amongst others.

Princess Maxima of Netherlands Arrives in Liberia

[In Profile Daily]

- Princess Maxima of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has arrived in Liberia for a three-day visit.
- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said Princess Maxima will hold talks with President Sirleaf on today, Tuesday.
- Details of the meeting with the President are unknown but it is expected to focus on possible assistance to Liberia.
- The Dutch Princess will also hold talks with senior Finance Ministry officials and executives of commercial banks in the country.

World Bank MD Assures Liberia of HIPC Completion, Support

[Heritage, The Informer, In Profile Daily]

- The Managing Director of the World Bank has expressed her confidence that Liberia will reach the Completion Point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative tomorrow.
- Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the World Bank is impressed with the progress Liberia is making in its post-conflict recovery programs.
- Mrs. Okonjo-Iweala said Liberia is seen as a post-conflict success story.
- The World Bank Managing Director said Liberia and its President Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf remain willing and committed to economic reform and prudent fiscal and monetary reforms.
- She assured that the World Bank will continue to provide development assistance to Liberia even after the HIPC Completion Point.
- She commended Liberia for the milestone in its debt waiver drive and hoped the country will continue to keep fiscal discipline and continue its positive engagement with multilateral institutions.
- Speaking earlier, Finance Minister, Augustine Ngafuan, thanked the World Bank for the support it has been providing Liberia since 2006.
- Minister Ngafuan and Mrs. Okonjo-Iweala spoke Monday in Washington DC in a build up meeting held ahead of the Bank's board meeting that takes place Tuesday, 29 June in Washington DC.
- The World Bank Board is expected to approve Liberia's attainment of HIPC Completion Point as was done by the International Monetary Fund's Board last week.

Multi-million Agro Company Takes Over Oil Palm Plantation in Maryland

[Front Page Africa]

- A multi-million dollar Ivorian-based Agro Company, SIFCA has taken over the Decoris Oil Palm Plantation in Pleebo-Sodoken, Maryland County.
- SIFCA officially took over the Plantation last Friday, two months after it was announced winner of a bid by the National Investment Commission.
- The Special Advisor to the Company's Chief Executive Officer said the group has an investment package of US\$60 million for a three-year period.
- Mr. Charles Gomis said SIFCA will recruit and train close to 170 people and plant 2,000 hectares of high-yield palm trees this year.
- Mr. Gomis believes the investment will bring tangible benefits and foster sustainable development through the creation of jobs and training opportunities.
- SIFCA is involved with the cultivation and processing of oil palm, natural rubber and sugar cane in five West African Countries including Nigeria and Ghana.

Nimba Land Dispute Report Ready

[In Profile Daily]

- Commission on the Nimba Land Dispute has completed its work and would submit its report to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Wednesday, 30 June 2010.
- The commission was set up last year by President Sirleaf to find an amicable solution to the Nimba land dispute.
- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said the report would be submitted to the President in the presence of the Nimba Legislative Caucus.
- The Commission is chaired by businessman Musa Bility.

LTA Chairperson Gets Top Post

[In Profile Daily]

- The Chairperson of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA), Ms. Angelique Weeks has been appointed Vice Chairperson of the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) Consortium Management Committee.
- Ms. Weeks' appointment was endorsed earlier this month by ACE Consortium at its first management committee meeting.
- It followed the signing of a US\$700 million agreement, which seeks the construction and maintenance of a 17,000 kilometer long fiber optic submarine cable along the coast of West Africa.
- The cable will extend from France to South Africa and is to provide broadband connectivity to 23 African countries including Liberia by 2012.
- Ms. Weeks in a release said the new service will provide faster internet connectivity and video conferencing among others for Liberia.
- Liberia's contribution to the project will be made available by the Cable Consortium of Liberia, comprising Lonestar, Libtelco and Cellcom.
- Government through a World Bank grant will also support the project.

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

President Sirleaf Addresses Nation Today

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

President Sirleaf Re-nominates Rejected LBS Director General

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has resubmitted the name of Mr. Darryl Ambrose Nmah to the Senate for confirmation as Director General of the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS).
- In a letter dated 24 June, President Sirleaf asked the Senate to reconsider its decision to reject the confirmation of Mr. Nmah.
- The President's letter to the Senate comes weeks after it twice denied the confirmation of the controversial nominee.
- Reports say unlike in the past when the nomination of Mr. Nmah was made public, this time his re-nomination has been kept in secret.
- In the letter, President Sirleaf said the Senate needed to reconsider Mr. Nmah because of his services to the nation.
- The Senate is meanwhile expected today to vote on Mr. Nmah who was earlier rejected on grounds of poor human relations.

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

Senate Confirms Several Presidential Nominees, Defers Another for Tuesday

- Reports say the Senate has confirmed several presidential nominees.
- They include Assistant Internal Affairs Minister Allison Barco and Montserrado Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Comfort Bedell Marshall.
- Others confirmed are the Relieving Commissioner and District Commissioners of Montserrado, Sinoe, Grand Kru, Nimba and Lofa Counties.
- Meanwhile, the confirmation of Deputy Internal Affairs Minister-designate Gabriel Nyekan experienced a setback with another vote set for Tuesday.

Government Bans Export of Wildlife, Bush Meat Products

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

US Congressional Delegation Due in Liberia Sunday

Princess Maxima of Netherlands Arrives in Liberia

Multi-million Agro Company Takes Over Oil Palm Plantation in Maryland

Controversial Nigerian Businessman Clears Vice President Boakai

- The controversial Nigerian businessman Bode Delon has somersaulted days after he implicated Vice President Joseph Boakai in a shady iron ore deal.
- Mr. Delon had accused Vice President Boakai of playing a key role in his US\$55,000 iron ore deal involving Liberian businessman Francis Nyumalin.
- But in the latest mood Mr. Delon declared that the Vice President is totally innocent of the deal and only got involved as a family man days after the transaction collapsed.
- According to him, had the iron ore deal materialized, it would have created over 1,000 jobs for ordinary Liberians.
- The Nigerian businessman said the Chinese company had intended to buy about 750,000 tons of ore totaling US\$71 million.
- Mr. Delon called on President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to intervene in order to restore confidence to the investment climate.

Government Minister May Resign If...

- Deputy Lands, Mines and Energy Minister Kpandel Fayia has angrily reacted to claim linking him to a scam to dupe a Nigerian of US\$55,000.
- Minister Fayia dismissed the claim by Nigerian businessman Bode Delon as a lie and threatened to take the Nigerian to court for character assassination.
- According to Minister Fayia, he was prepared to quit government if evidence is produced linking him to duping the Nigerian businessman.
- The Deputy Energy Minister clarified his involvement in the iron ore transaction was the technical advice he gave the parties involved in the transaction.
- Deputy Minister Fayia said the parties to the transaction including Francis Nyumanlin sought his advice on the stockpile of iron ore at Mano River-Congo.
- According to him, the iron ore parties were told that it was too costly to transport the iron ore from Mano River-Congo.
- Minister Fayia said, during the entire process which began last year, money did not exchange hands and it was surprising for him to be linked to a scam.

Nimba Land Dispute Report Ready

LTA Chairperson Gets Top Post

Liberian Albinos Seek Budgetary Support

- The Albino Association of Liberia has confirmed petitioning the Legislature for US\$300,000 budgetary support.
- The President of the Association, Mrs. Patricia Logan said the petition was intended to seek the wellbeing of albinos in Liberia.
- Mrs. Logan said the albinos must not remain downplayed in the Liberian society as they equally need support to seek education.
- She also spoke of the discrimination of albinos in Liberia, stressing the albinos are not being treated fairly in terms of employment.

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

President Sirleaf Makes Appointments in Government

LNP Charges Man, 25 for Alleged Criminal SMS to Comium Subscribers

- The Liberia National Police (LNP) has charged and sent to court a 25-year old man on allegation of criminally sending text messages to Comium subscribers.
- LNP spokesman George Bardu said Gabriel Lameh was arrested following complains from the management of Comium that the accused has misled its many subscribers that they have won several promotional items.
- Mr. Bardu quotes Comium as saying the misleading messages sent allegedly by defendant Lameh has created mistrust among its many subscribers.

- The man has meanwhile denied the allegation but admitted being the owner of the Comium mobile phone that circulated the message.
- He was sent to court for impersonating.

Free Medical Outreach for River Cess County

- A seventeen-man US-based medical team is today expected to depart Monrovia for River Cess County to carryout free medical outreach for a couple of weeks.
- The delegation comprises doctors, nurses and other health practitioners.
- They are expected to carryout minor surgical operations and treatments.
- The service is provided in collaboration with the African Christian Fellowship international (ACFI).

International Clips on Liberia

Before go-ahead, Aegian Glory scanned www.expressindia.com

Kolkata Custom's officials on Monday embarked on a final search aboard MV Aegean Glory at Kolkata Port. With the UN authorities confirming the military cargo for peace-keeping forces, it may be just a matter of time before the issue is resolved. "The matter is now in the hands of the Customs. If any discrepancies are found, we will take legal action," said Bhupinder Singh, state Director General of Police. A Customs team thoroughly checked the cargo which contained military equipment, arms and ammunition. Sources stated the final check is meant to tally the cargo and verify it before the ship is given a go-ahead. The Customs officials received a communication from the New York-based Movement Control officials of the UN Mission confirming the consignment that included rocket launchers, smoke bombs and anti-aircraft guns, apart from other sophisticated arms and ammunition, police sources said. The letter from the UN office was received in response to queries made by the Customs authorities seeking detailed information about the Liberia-registered 'Aegean Glory', which was brought to the Kolkata dock Sunday afternoon amid tight security. Customs sources said the letter from the UN Mission also apologised for the inconvenience to the authorities and admitted the confusion was created as the ship did not have proper documentation. The missive also said the authorities here had not been properly intimated about the consignment by the ship.

UN working with India for release Pakistan-bound ship: official www.app.com.pk

Efforts are underway for the release of a United Nations-contracted cargo ship, which was detained by India last week as it sailed towards Pakistan with decommissioned weaponry from a UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia, a UN official said Monday. The MV Aegean Glory, a 500-foot-long Panama-registered ship, was seized by Indian customs authorities on Friday 50 kilometres south of Kolkata, claiming suspicious military cargo. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) "is working closely with Indian authorities to ensure the release of the cargo and to review the procedures that caused the confusion", the official said. "All cargo on board has UN markings and is being shipped under the authority of the United Nations," he added. The official said the ship's cargo included surplus Pakistani and Bangladeshi military equipment and Nepalese vehicles belonging to UN peacekeeping troops. The cargo was being returned upon completion of their deployment in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the official said. According to press reports, the Pakistan Foreign Office strongly objected to the detention of the ship, saying the Indian government never informed them about the seizure of the ship. The UN sent 15,000 troops into Liberia in 2003 after 14 years of civil war that claimed roughly 270,000 lives. In April, UNMIL began scaling back its presence after a UN and government assessment in 2007 that the country was gradually moving towards peace and stability.

Joint security collaboration essential for regional stability, UN West African Military officials assert at Intermission Force Commanders' Conference African Press Organization

Senior UN military officials in West Africa have resolved to strengthen collaboration on security concerns and enhance joint border patrols and close interaction between peacekeeping forces and other security agencies in the sub-region. These decisions were reached at the close of the 20th Intermission Force Commanders' Conference held at the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Headquarters over the weekend. The UN regional military chiefs discussed common security issues and challenges, and emphasized the need to closely coordinate their joint efforts, given the up-coming elections in much of the West African region. These include the current Guinean elections, the Cote d'Ivoire elections likely to take place at the end of this year, the 2011 Liberian electoral process, and the 2012 Sierra Leone elections. Matters centering on drug trafficking in West Africa and national security challenges relating to refugees and ex-combatants across the region, were also highlighted as crucial issues requiring the attention of UN security officials. Addressing the opening of the Conference, the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, stressed the importance of confronting common challenges in order to achieve the respective mission mandates. She was emphatic on the need for the formulation of a Joint Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) by UNMIL Military and UN Police (UNPOL), to protect Liberian civilians. Ms. Løj called on the UN Military officials to examine the need for training and equipping companies of each UNMIL battalion with riot control gear to assist the Liberia National Police and UNPOL. On the recent joint drug bust by the United States and Liberian governments, she underscored the necessity for close interaction and joint border patrolling to fight drug trafficking and trans-border crimes in order to enhance the stability of the West African sub-region.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

UN chief congratulates Guinea for peaceful presidential elections

<http://english.people.com.cn>

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Monday congratulated the government and the people of Guinea for peaceful conduct of the presidential elections in the West African country, and called on all parties concerned to accept the outcome of the Sunday polls. A statement, issued by Ban's spokesman, said: "The secretary-general congratulates the government and the people of Guinea, including the country's electoral commission, political stakeholders and civil society, for the peaceful atmosphere in which they conducted the June 27 presidential election." "As Guinea awaits the results of the vote, the secretary-general calls on all concerned to continue to respect their commitments to a peaceful process based on respect of the rule of law, and to accept the outcome," the statement said. "The secretary-general expresses his appreciation to all those who have been involved in facilitating the transitional process in Guinea, including the country's external partners, particularly ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States), the African Union and the other members of the International Contact Group on Guinea," the statement added.

Tension reins in Guinean party HQ before release of provisional results

www.apanews.net

Tension is palpable at the headquarters of some political parties, especially that of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) of Cellou Dalein Diallo, whose campaign manager Dr. Fode Oussou Fofana openly suspects the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of rigging the elections in Dixinn and Ratoma municipalities in Conakry. This tension comes on the eve of the announcement on Tuesday afternoon by the INEC of the first trends of 27 June presidential poll results. Fofana justified his accusations by "the slow vote-counting. This could have serious consequences," he told reporters on Monday. The same atmosphere of tension prevails at the Rally of the People of Guinea (RPG) of Alpha Conde and the Union of Republican Forces (UFR) of Sidya Toure. To avoid surprises, these parties centralize all results in their respective headquarters.

The Independent (Kampala)

Monday, 28 June 2010

Uganda: Superpowers Affirm Control over ICC at Kampala Conference

Mubatsi Asinja Habati

What did the first-ever Review Conference of the Rome Statute, which founded the International Criminal Court (ICC), in Kampala achieve?

Between May 31 and June 11, delegates from 111 state parties to the 1998 Rome Statute, non-state parties like the United States of America, NGOs, and others discuss proposed amendments to the Rome Statute and assessed its impact to date.

The conference deliberated on the rights of people during war times. It sought to arrive at amendments that increase the vigilance of the ICC on crimes against humanity, protect and ensure justice for victims of war, and make the court more active on prosecuting crime of state aggression.

The ICC is currently handling war crimes and crimes against humanity from various countries, including five from Africa. In Africa alone, the ICC is investigating five key cases but has so far convicted none.

The cases being investigated by the ICC are atrocities allegedly committed by the commanders of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda and during the post-election violence in Kenya. Other cases include the alleged war crimes committed by Congo's ex-Vice President Jean Pierre Bemba, alleged war crimes by Sudan President Omar El-Bashir and the case of Thomas Lubanga, the former leader of a militia group accused of war crimes in the civil conflict in DR Congo. The ICC is also handling the case of former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, at the opening of the conference called on African nations to co-operate with the ICC by arresting fugitive warlords against whom the court issued arrest warrants. He said the old era of impunity is over and a new age of accountability was setting in slowly but surely.

"In this new age of accountability, those who commit the worst of human crimes will be held responsible," said Ban.

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda challenged the conference to define "just" and "unjust" wars, freedom fighters and terrorists. He argued that one might fight a just war but use terrorist tactics to achieve freedom of people.

According to a statement by the Coalition for the ICC (CICC), an NGO, two important decisions on the proposed amendments to the Court's treaty were reached.

First, after high-level discussions, the conference agreed not to delete Article 124 of the Rome Statute that allows States not to subject their nationals to the Court's prosecutions or investigations over war crimes for a seven year period.

Secondly, States accepted to extend the use of poisonous or nuclear chemicals as war crimes in non-international conflicts.

The CICC, however, does not list the handling of a third major issue at the conference, the crime of aggression, as a success.

"The Coalition for the ICC is advocating for an end to impunity for all serious crimes, including the Crime of Aggression," said CICC Convenor William R. Pace. "Although agreement on the definition of the crime is a step forward for international justice, and more importantly for victims of this crime, the conditions agreed by States for the prosecution of the crime would leave many states out of the reach of justice," he emphasised.

Pace's comment reflect the extent of controversy over the crime of aggression that stretched on past the last day of the conference with participating countries discussing the matter into the day after the conference had officially ended.

The small power states wanted to sign the crime of aggression as soon as possible but the five superpowers were opposed to the definition of the law. The United Nations Security Council permanent members states were worried the crime of aggression would make the court more powerful and would have powers to investigate the so-called superpowers.

In the end, the conference defined the crime of aggression as the use of force that manifestly breaches the United Nations charter and includes an invasion, a bombardment, port blockade or a country allowing a state to use its territory to attack a third nation.

But the conference failed to give the ICC jurisdiction over the crime of aggression until 30 states have ratified the new amendment. In addition, States Parties will have to make a positive decision to activate the jurisdiction after Jan.1, 2017.

Interestingly the non-signatories to the Rome Statute such as the United States of America who were invited to the meeting as observers ended up lecturing the participating countries on the pros and cons of the crime of aggression.

While other nations purely saw the crime of aggression as a political matter others viewed it as a way of getting at and restraining the big powers from bullying other nations especially those regarded as weak.

Some participants feared that handling crimes of aggression would make the court political and weaken its effectiveness.

It was feared by some of the Security Council member states like the US that giving this power to ICC would contravene the UN charter.

"The language of the definition specifically says what can be prosecuted is an act of such character and gravity and scale that it would constitute a manifest violation of the UN charter," Stephen J. Rapp, US ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, told journalists.

The ICC's mandate is to protect future generations from genocide and other crimes against humanity that have ravaged generations past and present. In failing to expand the Court's mandate to prosecute the crime of aggression, the Kampala conference may have failed to strengthen the ICC's effective and the broader system of international justice

Wire Update

Thursday, 24 June 2010

Liberian anti-terrorism unit member sentenced for perjury in U.S. court

By BNO News

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS (BNO NEWS) – A Liberian man was sentenced on Wednesday to 10 months in prison for two counts of perjury after denying being a member of the Liberian anti-terrorism unit, prosecutors announced on Thursday.

Richard Willie, 30, came to the United States with the limited purpose to testify as a defense witness in the case of U.S. v. Roy Belfast aka "Chucky" Taylor in Florida. Chucky is the son of former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor and he founded the Liberian anti-terrorism unit, the most savage military group of the African nation.

Willie did not testify and fled to Massachusetts where he asked for political asylum. His application was reviewed and he was asked to testify before an Immigration Court. During the testimony, Willie was asked if he was ever a member of Taylor's anti-terrorist unit to which he falsely denied. He also denied submitting himself for demobilization to the United Nations.

Taylor's anti-terrorist unit engaged in numerous human rights violations during the conflict in Liberia. It was led by the former President Charles Taylor. Willie committed perjury while trying to conceal his participation in that criminal organization.

Willie was also sentenced to three years of supervised release following his prison time with the condition that if he is deported he is not allowed to return to the United States.

Eurasia Review

Wednesday, 30 June 2010

U.S. Hijacks ICC conference

By Francis Njubi Nesbitt

The United States managed to foil the International Criminal Court's (ICC) adoption of the crime of aggression as part of its mandate during the just-concluded review conference in Kampala, Uganda. Despite the fact that the United States is not a signatory to the Rome Statute, which established the ICC, and thus did not have a vote at the conference, U.S. negotiators cajoled a majority of the state parties to delay the definition and adoption of the crime of aggression for another seven years. Where the Bush administration used threats and tried to intimidate, the Obama team offered sweet-talk and enticements to get states to delay the amendment expanding ICC jurisdiction to include the crime of aggression. It also managed to water down the definition of aggression and to exempt U.S. personnel from prosecution. The latter was a goal of the previous administration and the reason for U.S. hostility toward the ICC.

Crowing with satisfaction, the State Department reported on June 16 that the agreement had ensured "total protection for our Armed Forces and other U.S. nationals going forward." This indemnity was achieved by a series of amendments that exempted non-state parties from prosecution and gave the U.N. Security Council the power to determine if a crime of aggression has occurred. If the Security Council finds that aggression has not occurred, then the prosecutor would have to seek a majority vote of pre-trial judges and even then, the Security Council would still have the power to thwart the process with a binding Chapter 7 resolution disapproving the action. Even if the United States becomes a state party to the ICC at some point, it could still opt out of having U.S. citizens prosecuted for aggression.

The Carrot Approach

The success in promoting U.S. interests was achieved by offering inducements, such as "generous" support for national legal systems in state parties through information sharing and support in arresting suspects. The focus on national legal remedies for war crimes and crimes against humanity has been touted as the alternative to international justice. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda -- which I am currently visiting -- and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, in particular have been criticized for spending hundreds of millions of dollars with little to show for it. Critics such as President Paul Kagame of Rwanda argue that the local Gacaca courts, based on indigenous norms, are faster and more relevant to ordinary Rwandans than distant international tribunals. Both the international tribunals and the local courts, however, suffer from the malady; both tend to prosecute the "losers" and ignore crimes that may have been perpetrated by the victors. The only exception is the Special Court for Sierra Leone which prosecuted both sides of the civil war.

Another incentive offered to mitigate U.S. meddling is "cooperation," such as information sharing and support in the location and arrest of suspects. ICC officials argued before the conference that the United States could provide critical counterintelligence support in the search for, and arrest of, indicted war criminals such as Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord's Resistance Army. The ICC charged Kony with individual criminal responsibility on 33 counts of crimes against humanity including, murder, mutilation, rape, mass burnings, and enslavement. It issued an arrest warrant for him on July 7, 2005. The United States has also designated Kony a "specially designated terrorist" (SDT), a designation that allows the United States to block his assets and criminalize any association with the said individual or group. Other SDTs include Osama bin Laden and Hamas.

A Renewed U.S. Role

Despite its success in delaying the ICC's jurisdiction over aggression, the United States failed in its main objective to defeat the amendment altogether. Instead, the United States tried to politicize the ICC by enhancing the role of the Security Council and therefore giving permanent members the power to subvert the process. Ironically, this is the very issue, politicization, that the United States claimed was the problem with the ICC in the first place.

This renewed engagement with the ICC suggests that the Obama administration is interested in shaping international law while remaining immune to prosecution under the very laws it helps develop. In the case of the ICC, the cover story is that the United States is concerned that its troops engaged in peacekeeping around the world may be subject to malicious prosecution.

Critics of the ICC argue that it is a toothless watchdog because it relies on member states to arrest suspects. They point to Omar al-Bashir of Sudan who continues to thumb his nose at the ICC, despite an arrest warrant issued in 2009 for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. The counter argument is that international war crimes tribunals have successfully prosecuted heads of state including former Prime Minister John Kambanda of Rwanda, and former presidents Slobodan Milošević of Serbia and Charles Taylor of Liberia.

The latter case is particularly instructive as the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which prosecuted Taylor for his role in the civil war, is a hybrid of national and international justice, bringing together both local and international prosecutors and judges. Such hybrid processes have also worked in the case of Cambodia where a U.N.-backed tribunal is trying senior members of the Khmer Rouge for violations of international humanitarian law. Locating the tribunals in the countries where the crimes were committed both enhances the capacity of national judicial systems and involves the local communities in the process. In some cases, however, powerful individuals are able to thwart efforts to establish local tribunals. In such cases, for example the recent experience in Kenya, it may be necessary to resort to international courts.

Although critics are furious at the role of the United States in shaping the agenda of the review conference, this reengagement with international institutions is a positive step. The United States can play a role in the international arena by supporting efforts to bring suspects such as Kony to justice and putting pressure on sitting presidents such as Omar al-Bashir. Meanwhile, expanding the jurisdiction of the ICC to include aggression will be revisited in 2017, giving activists and other interested parties another opportunity to advocate for the increasing role of the ICC in international law.

Francis Njubi Nesbitt is a Foreign Policy In Focus contributor and teaches African politics and conflict resolution at San Diego State University. He is the author of *Race for Sanctions* (Indiana University Press, 2004) and is completing a book on peacemaking in the Horn of Africa.

FPIF

Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIF) is a “Think Tank Without Walls” connecting the research and action of more than 600 scholars, advocates, and activists seeking to make the United States a more responsible global partner. It is a project of the Institute for Policy Studies.

FPIF provides timely analysis of U.S. foreign policy and international affairs and recommends policy alternatives. We believe U.S. security and world stability are best advanced through a commitment to peace, justice and environmental protection as well as economic, political, and social rights. We advocate that diplomatic solutions, global cooperation, and grassroots participation guide foreign policy. For a more detailed explanation of our foreign policy vision, please consult *Just Security*, our framework document.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 30 June 2010

Darfur rebels appear at ICC



The Hague, Netherlands

By International Justice
Tribune

Two Darfur rebel commanders appeared before the International Criminal Court's pre-trial chamber in The Hague on June 17th, charged in connection with a deadly

attack in 2007 on an African Union peacekeeping mission (AMIS) that killed 12 and wounded eight others in the village of Haskanita in Darfur.

By Tajeldin Adam

Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain, former commander-in-chief of the Justice and Equality Movement and Saleh Mohammed Jarbo, former chief-of-staff of SLA-Unity, each face three counts of war crimes, including violence to life, targeting peacekeeping personnel and pillaging.

The same charges were brought by the prosecution against another rebel leader – Bahar Idriss Abu Garda - whose case was scrapped for lack of evidence in February. ICC prosecutors had requested a summons to appear for the three commanders in November 2008. Abu Garda was the first to appear but it took some time for Banda and Jarbo to come forward.

“I took up arms to seek justice. I decided to cooperate with the court because I know the court has duties to find out the truth. I call on every one who is accused by the court to come forward and clear their names,” Banda told the court.

The confirmation of charges hearing is scheduled to start on November 22nd and the prosecution faces a difficult task to persuade the judges to confirm the charges and move the case forward. In the Abu Garda case, judges ruled that the prosecution failed to provide adequate evidence to establish his involvement in the attack. The vital question now is, can the prosecution avoid another setback and proceed with the case?

Its success is not only important for the prosecution but also for the court. The collapse of Abu Garda's case allowed the Sudanese government to brand the court “hypocritical” and the pre-trial sessions a “theatrical show.”

It is no surprise to hear this kind of rhetoric from Khartoum which, from the very beginning, labeled the ICC a new tool of Western colonialism. But others are now starting to express their concern about the ability of the prosecution to support the claims brought against Banda and Jarbo.

Hafiz Mohamed of rights group Justice Africa also questions the motivation of the prosecution in bringing the case against the two commanders. “I think the assumption that the prosecutor has opened this case to show some balance between the warring sides in Darfur makes a bit of sense. It is clear that he was, to some extent, hasty in gathering evidence and scrutinizing it. It will be interesting to wait and see how it will proceed, but if we weigh it in the light of the evidence presented to the judges in Abu Garda’s situation, it is a weak case.”

Nevertheless, even in the Abu Garda ruling, judges accepted that the Haskanita attack warranted the attention of the court, as it had consequences not only for AMIS personnel but also for the vulnerable local population who benefited from the presence of the mission.

And this is what matters for the prosecution: investigating the case and tracing the offenders. “Any talk about show of balance to silent critics and skeptics beyond the limit of the crime is mere political talk,” says Ali Agab of the Coalition for the ICC. “The court is not seeking and not keen to respond to such politically driven analysis. The court’s limit is to investigate the crime and compile evidence for the judges. What happened in Haskanita is a crime that falls under the jurisdiction of the court. The lack of evidence in Abu Garda’s case doesn’t bury the fact that a crime took place in Haskanita and claimed the life of innocent peacekeepers.”

Internally displaced people (IDPs) in Darfur have welcomed Banda and Jarbo’s appearance before the court. “We want everyone who is wanted by the court for crimes to go to The Hague and face the charges. The African Union peacekeepers were there to help us and protect us. Any attack on them is an attack on us and our interest” says one IDP from Taweela camp, west of Alfashir.

Hirondelle News Agency

Tuesday, 29 June 2010

ICTR denies former minister's application for dismissal of indictment

Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has rejected the request by genocide-accused and former Rwandan minister of Public Service Prosper Mugiraneza, seeking dismissal of his indictment for "violation of right to trial without undue delay."

"Mugiraneza has failed to show that he has been denied his right to a fair trial without undue delay," the chamber said in its ruling posted on the Tribunal's website.

Mugiraneza is jointly charged with three other former Rwandan ministers in a case known as "Government II". They are Casimir Bizimungu (Health), Jérôme Bicomumpaka (Foreign Affairs) and Justin Mugenzi (Trade).

The defendant had already filed three such motions before the Tribunal without any success.

According to the motion, the accused wanted the Chamber to give greatest weight to the length of the delay, pointing out that he had been under detention for 4,018 days.

The Chamber, however, recalled Appeals Chamber's ruling that in order to determine whether there has been undue delay it was necessary to conduct full inquiry by taking into account all important factors.

They include complexity of proceedings before an ad hoc international Tribunal, conduct of parties and authorities and even the number of the accused involved in a trial, factors which the ruling stated were not taken into consideration by the applicant.

"The Chamber is now at the stage of deliberating and considering judgment," indicated the ruling while insisting that there has not been undue delay in this case.

The ruling was endorsed by two members of the bench; Judges Khalida Khan (Presiding) and Lee Muthoga whereas Judge Frances Short gave a dissenting opinion on the matter.

Prosper Mugiraneza was arrested in Cameroon on April 6, 1999 and transferred to the ICTR detention facility in Arusha in July 1999.

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Tuesday, 29 June 2010

Bagosora claims to have been unaware of Interahamwe Military training

Former Director of Cabinet in the Rwandan Defence Ministry Theoneste Bagosora Tuesday told the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) that he was not aware of military training given to notorious Interahamwe militia of the youth wing of the ruling MRND party in 1994.

"I am not aware of such programme. I have no any information regarding the training of Interahamwe," said genocide-convict Bagosora when testifying as defence witness for former Secretary General of MRND, Joseph Nzirorera.

He was being cross-examined by prosecution counsel, Don Webster who contended that despite the signing of a cease-fire agreement in March 1993, MRND started training Interahamwe and that investigations conducted by Human rights organizations revealed that the Rwandan Armed Forces offered such training.

The prosecutor further referred to statements given to Belgian senate by the former Rwandan Gendarmerie Chief of Staff, General Augustin Ndindiliyimana after his arrest that he was an eye witness of training of Interahamwe in 1993. Gen. Ndindiliyimana is genocide-accused alongside three other former military officers now waiting delivery of their judgement.

However, Bagosora refuted the assertion, saying that if Gen. Ndindiliyimana was aware of the training he would have reported to the Minister of Defence.

"He sent no report to the Minister of Defence that he had seen Interahamwe being militarily trained," he said. Bagosora has been sentenced to life imprisonment for masterminding the 1994 genocide. He is currently waiting the hearing of his appeal against the verdict.

The case continues Wednesday.

Nzirorera is charged jointly with his co-top MRND leaders, President Mathieu Ndirumpatse and his Vice-President Edouard Karemera. They are charged with crimes allegedly committed by members of their party.

The prosecution has indicted them for their superior responsibility as top officials of the party then in power during the genocide.

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Mizzima

Tuesday, 29 June 201

<http://www.mizzima.com/news/regional>

Put Burmese regime on trial at ICC, People's Court urges

Salai Han Thar San

New Delhi (Mizzima) – A “People’s Court” in Japan passed its verdict on Monday to put the Burmese military regime on trial at the International Criminal Court for its crimes against women in Burma.

The verdict was reached during a mock trial at Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, after a five-member panel of experienced judges heard the testimony of four victims from Burma and arguments from prosecution and defence counsels.

“The judges passed eight verdicts during the court’s session, including their finding that the [Burmese] military regime was guilty of committing crimes against women based on the testimonies given by victims and that it should be put on trial at the ICC,” Women’s League of Burma presidium board member Thin Thin Aung told Mizzima.

The panel comprised Japanese former Supreme Court justice Kunio Hamada, Chiba University law professor Hiroko Goto, Aoyama Gakuin University law professor Osamu Niikura, International Association of Democratic Lawyers secretary-general Miho Shikita, Japan Federation of Bar Associations former vice-president Hideaki Kobori.

The United Nations was urged to form a commission to investigate the junta’s crimes and said the international community including Japan should make concerted efforts to stop their heinous acts, the verdicts say Kyi Kyi Khin, Pu Sein, Tin Tin Nyo from WLB on behalf of Naw Sunset and WLB representative Mra Yar Zar Lin testified during proceedings between 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sunday. Eight lawyers acted for the prosecution and three conducted the junta’s defence.

“I testified ... telling them [the judges] how I was put in a dark cell during interrogation by intelligence officers and of the other gross human rights violations in prison I experienced while serving my sentence”, former political prisoner Kyi Kyi Khin said.

The military regime arrested former NLD party and All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) members in 1990 for distributing pamphlets commemorating the July 7 massacre at Rangoon University in 1962. For 28 days Kyi Kyi Khin suffered brutality under questioning at the Military Intelligence No. 4 detention centre, where she was held in darkness and subjected to a variety of cruel and unusual torture methods. She was then sentenced to two years’ imprisonment and was released in May 1992.

The mock trial’s organiser, Cho Cho Aye, said Japanese lawyers representing the military regime presented their arguments for their clients’ defence. Cho Cho Aye is representative of the Burmese Women’s Union (BWU) Japanese branch.

“The defence counsels questioned the testimony, evidence and exhibits presented in court [by the prosecution,” she said. “In cross-examination, they also questioned whether [junta chief Senior General] Than Shwe was responsible for the crimes committed by the army’s rank and file.”

The proceedings were the first mock trial in a People’s Court conducted in Japan, which was also organised by Japan-based Human Rights Now. More than 300 Japanese and Burmese attended.

A similar trial was organised by the WLB and female Nobel laureates of the Nobel Women's Initiative in New York in early March. At that trial, 12 Burmese victims of human rights violations testified to crimes visited upon them by the military junta.

“We shall continue our campaign in the international community until we can put the Burmese regime on trial at the ICC,” Thin Thin Aung said. “This campaign can ... warn the junta leaders against committing their crimes against humanity in fear of facing trial at the ICC in future.”

ICC, founded in July 1998 and based in the Netherlands, is funded by states' parties, international governments and organisations, and individuals. It is the main independent international legal body “established to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community”.

The court usually indicts and presents verdicts on genocide committed across the world, along with serious international crimes, crimes against humanity and war crimes, by exercising powers granted it under the Rome Statute, the treaty signed by the parties that established the court.

The trial's organisers will present the panel's verdicts to the Japanese government and will urge it to shun the Burmese general election results unless the regime releases all political prisoners, including pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who is being held under house arrest by the junta on spurious charges. She has been held in various forms of detention for 15 of the past 21 years.

The trial follows UN special rapporteur for human rights in Burma Tomas Ojea Quintana's report to the UN Security Council, which similarly called for the UN to form a commission of inquiry to investigate the gross violations of human rights committed by the junta.