

**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:

Monday, 10 January 2011

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Voice of America
Monday, 10 January 2011

Obasanjo Making Mediation Attempt in Ivory Coast

Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo was in Ivory Coast Sunday, making a new effort to mediate the country's political crisis.

Officials familiar with the situation say Mr. Obasanjo arrived in the main city of Abidjan on Saturday and held separate talks with incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo and rival Alassane Ouattara.

The officials said more talks were planned for Sunday.

The international community recognizes Mr. Ouattara as the winner of November's presidential election, but Mr. Gbagbo insists that he won the vote and has refused to step down.

African leaders have held several meetings with the incumbent in hopes of convincing him to leave, so far without success.

The West African bloc ECOWAS has threatened to remove Mr. Gbagbo by force unless he cedes power to Mr. Ouattara.

Regional support for Mr. Ouattara weakened slightly Friday when Ghana's president, John Atta Mills, said his country is not taking sides in the standoff and will support any government in Ivory Coast.

Mr. Mills also said he does not support the use of military force to oust Mr. Gbagbo.

Pro-Gbagbo forces continue to keep Mr. Ouattara confined to the Abidjan hotel where he has been for about a month.

Hirondelle News Agency

Thursday, 6 January 2010

ICTR orders reduction of Ndahimana's defence witnesses

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has ordered the defence in the case of former Mayor of Kivumu Commune, Kibuye prefecture, Grégoire Ndahimana, to reduce the number of 42 witnesses he intends to call.

"The Chamber orders, pursuant to Rule 54 and 73ter (D) of the Rules, that the defence review its witnesses and file by close of business on January 12, 2011, a revised and significantly reduced witness list and order of appearance," Trial Chamber III said in its order published on the ICTR website.

The Chamber noted in the witness summaries provided by defence that numerous witnesses would testify about the election of the accused as a mayor, his good character and relations with Tutsis.

"Generally, the summaries suggest that defence plans to call excessive number of witnesses to prove the same facts, which may result in the prospective testimony being repetitious and redundant," the Chamber further noted.

The defence filed its pre-defence brief on December 7, 2010. The Chamber observed that the proposed 42 witnesses would take approximate 157 hours on examination in chief alone and require 31 trial days.

Therefore, according to the Chamber, the total defence case including cross examination and re-examination of witnesses could be significantly longer than that.

Ndahimana is scheduled to start presenting his defence case on January 17, 2011. In proving its case against the accused, the prosecution called only 15 witnesses in 19 trial days. It closed its case on November 19, 2010.

Lead Counsel for the accused Bharat Chadha told the Hirondelle News Agency on Thursday that he would comply with the order and file the revised list of witnesses before January 12, 2011.

"We cannot appeal at this early stage. We are ready to comply with the order. I cannot say to what extent, but we will make some adjustments of the witness list and it will be upon the Chamber to decide whether the submitted list will be reasonable," the counsel said.

The former mayor is charged with genocide or complicity in genocide, in the alternative and extermination as crime against humanity. He is alleged to have planned the massacres at Nyange Parish jointly with other officials. The trial commenced on September 6, 2010.

Ndahimana was arrested in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on August 10, 2009. He was transferred to the Arusha UN Detention Facility on August 21, 2009. He made his initial appearance on September 28, 2009 and pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

FK/ER/GF

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Agence France Presse

Saturday, 8 January 2010

Rwanda wants Hutu rebel tried for genocide

KIGALI — The Rwandan rebel who is to stand trial at the International Criminal Court for war crimes in DR Congo must also be tried for his alleged role in the Rwandan genocide, Kigali said on Friday.

Callixte Mbarushimana, who is accused of crimes including murder and rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2009, is due to be sent to the ICC premises in The Hague by the end of January after a French court this week rejected an appeal against his detention and transfer.

Mbarushimana, a Hutu and executive secretary of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), has also been accused of involvement in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

"We would have preferred him to be transferred to Rwanda to be tried for his role in the genocide," Rwandan Justice Minister Tharcisse Karugarama told AFP.

"We congratulate the ICC for having taken the decision to pursue him for crimes against humanity and war crimes in the DRC. But the genocide is more serious," he said.

"It's essential that he is also tried -- in Rwanda or elsewhere -- for genocide. We hope that one day he'll be tried for the crime of genocide committed in Rwanda," Karugarama went on.

The ICC will charge Mbarushimana with five counts of crimes against humanity and six counts of war crimes, notably murder, rape and torture committed in the DR Congo in 2009.

Mbarushimana was placed under investigation in France, where he has lived as a political refugee since 2002, on December 21 for his alleged role in the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which an estimated 800,000 people, chiefly Tutsis, were killed.

Daily Star (Lebanon)

Saturday, 8 January, 2011

Late general's son has no faith in Tribunal

Son of Francois Hajj, assassinated in 2007, talks to The Daily Star about 'rotten' judiciary

By Wassim Mroueh



BEIRUT: The son of an assassinated army general said Friday he does not trust the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (S.T.L.) and blasted international and local investigators for neglecting his father's case.

"I do not trust the international tribunal ... the course of the international investigations over four years does not assure the family of any martyr," Elie Hajj, the son of late Gen. Francois Hajj, said in an interview with The Daily Star.

"This international tribunal, which is supposed not to take any side, arrested four officers for four years and then released them; it relied on witnesses who turned out to be false, and while conducting investigations, it tried to implicate Syria for four years and now it is accusing Hizbullah," Hajj said.

"Is it the regional situation that determines who shall be accused?" he asked. "How can I trust a tribunal which has adopted such a course? This tribunal is supposed to rely on real facts."

Hajj also said that the S.T.L. was no longer investigating his father's assassination, despite the presence of "precise" evidence.

"[In the wake of the assassination], investigators informed us that they had very important facts and clues, which they said they haven't had in any other crime, they had very precise details regarding who bought the [booby-trapped] car, from where and at what time it was bought and parked," Hajj, 29, explained.

"But one year later, they called us saying that the case will be closed due to a lack of new information, although we were cooperating with the international investigations," he said.

Hajj was assassinated in a car bomb on Dec. 12, 2007 in Baabda. The younger Hajj lashed out at the Lebanese judiciary as well, labeling it as "rotten," and stressed that his father's case was neglected and that investigations were slow.

"We asked the [Lebanese] judiciary to investigate a woman who said that she saw a bearded man who parked the [booby-trapped car] and to ask her to draw a sketch of that person, but they summoned her a year-and-a-half later," he said.

The S.T.L. was established by the U.N. to investigate the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and those involved in the following series of assassinations, including Hajj's.

But since July, Hizbullah has labeled the Netherlands-based court an “Israeli project” designed to foment strife in Lebanon, as it expects members from the party to be named in an impending S.T.L. indictment.

Saudi Arabia and Syria are trying to broker a settlement to avert potential strife in the wake of the indictment. Media reports said that the alleged settlement could call on Prime Minister Saad Hariri to renounce the S.T.L.

“Following a long experience with the tribunal, I can assure you that Hizbullah is innocent,” Hajj said.

The late Hajj played a leading role in battles that broke out during the summer of 2007 between the Lebanese Army and militants from the Fatah al-Islam group in the north Lebanon Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared.

But Hajj ruled out that Fatah al-Islam might be involved in his father’s killing.

“Usually, Fatah al-Islam claims the responsibility of any operation it carries out, but they have denied any involvement [in this case],” he said, adding that he had no idea who killed his father.

“I cannot accuse anyone because I do not have facts, but I know very well that all those who committed crimes in Lebanon were mercenaries, and the big question is who is behind them,” he said.

Hajj said that the wound of his father’s slaying has yet to heal.

“The wound is more severe because we have yet to discover who killed Francois Hajj and why was he killed, which should be easy questions to answer,” he added.

“After three years, we are unable to tell Francois Hajj that his blood has not been spilled in vain ... The dream of Francois Hajj can be materialized by building one united Lebanon, by identifying those who killed the martyrs, and by the international tribunal arriving at a truth that is not politicized,” he said.

Hajj – who works as a unit manager with the pharmaceutical department of Fattal Company – cited his father’s assassination as one of the reasons he failed to follow through with an earlier plan to emigrate.

“I would have left Lebanon had my father not died for the sake of the country ... following my father’s death, I promised him that I would continue his path and reveal the truth regarding his assassination by all means,” he said.

Read more:

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=123387#ixzz1Ad7AOK56
(The Daily Star :: Lebanon News :: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb>)

BBC Online

Tuesday, 4 January 2011

Rwanda rebel Mbarushimana's extradition to ICC upheld



Callixte Mbarushimana has defended the FDLR's human rights record

France's highest court has upheld an order to extradite Rwandan rebel leader Callixte Mbarushimana to face trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

A lawyer for Mr Mbarushimana said the court had rejected his client's appeal against extradition.

Mr Mbarushimana is accused of 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, allegedly committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo last year.

The lawyer told the AFP news agency his client could soon be extradited.

The ICC in The Hague says there is evidence suggesting that Mr Mbarushimana, who has lived in France as a political refugee since 2002, contributed to the crimes in DR Congo via local and international media.

Mr Mbarushimana's ethnic Hutu FDLR group is at the heart of years of conflict in eastern DR Congo, near Rwanda.

The Telegraph

Monday, 10 January 2011

Russia 'terrified' over Viktor Bout trial, lawyer claims

The Kremlin is "terrified" that America's forthcoming trial of Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout will expose his links to top Russian officials and Moscow's secret deals with controversial regimes around the world, it has been claimed.



Russian arms trafficking suspect Viktor Bout (C) in U.S. custody after being flown from Bangkok to New York Photo: AP



By Andrew Osborn

In an interview with The Daily Telegraph, international lawyer Robert Amsterdam said that Mr Bout, who was extradited to America from Thailand in November, possessed a treasure trove of compromising information.

"It is limitless," said Mr Amsterdam. "He is connected to Russia's shadow state and the most powerful elements of the power elite. He has tremendous information on how that shadow state works and on its dealings with Venezuela, Iran and across Asia.

"It would be an intelligence coup to debrief this man if he will allow himself to be debriefed."

In a recent interview with Russia's RIA Novosti news agency from his New York prison cell, Mr Bout disclosed how US authorities had tried to get him to break his silence.

"I was offered a milder sentence, a lower prison term and the possibility to bring my family to the US if I tell them everything I know about my ties in Russia and other countries," he said.

"But I replied that I had nothing to tell them and that I don't know anything about the subjects they are interested in."

Mr Bout, who is often referred to as the 'Lord of War' because of a 2005 Hollywood film based on his life of the same name, was arrested in 2008 in Thailand after a sting operation masterminded by the US Drug Enforcement Agency.

Federal agents said they caught him offering to supply weapons to people he believed were Columbian FARC rebels.

The 43-year-old former Soviet army translator founded a vast air transport empire after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union that allegedly supplied weapons to fuel a string of wars in Africa and the Middle East.

Washington's battle to extradite him faced serious opposition from Moscow, which reacted with fury when it learnt he had been secretly flown to America to face trial.

The Kremlin and his family continue to insist he is an ordinary businessman.

Mr Bout, who has pleaded not guilty to terrorism charges, is due to appear in a New York court on January 21 for an initial hearing. If found guilty, he faces a maximum penalty of life in prison and a minimum of 25 years.