

**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:

Thursday, 6 January 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awareness Times
Thursday, 6 January 2010

Special Court Inmates Under Fire

Reports have alleged that the 8 Sierra Leonean Prisoners of the Special Court for Sierra Leone who are serving jail term in Mpanga, Rwanda are living in deplorable and inhuman conditions. The inmates were jailed for war crimes and other related issues committed during the war in Sierra Leone. Reports alleged that allowances and other basic rights which the prisoners have are no longer effective. The detainees as alleged are not given fear treatment by the Rwanda Prison authorities.

Reuters

Thursday, 6 January 2011

Ouattara says rival Gbagbo ordered Ivory Coast violence

PARIS (Reuters) - Ivory Coast's presidential claimant Alassane Ouattara said on Thursday he had proof his rival, Laurent Gbagbo, had instigated post-election violence and ordered foreign agents to carry out killings.

"Laurent Gbagbo has blood on his hands. He has ordered assassinations of citizens by foreign agents," Ouattara told Europe 1 radio. "Of course, we have proof of this."

"I have already written to the Secretary General of the United Nations to ask that the International Criminal Court send a team of investigators to Ivory Coast, and I am told that this will be done in coming days."

Ivory Coast has been in turmoil since a November 28 poll that Western powers and African states say was won by Ouattara. Gbagbo has held on to power and called this week for a U.N. peacekeeping mission to leave the country.

Ouattara, who is living in a hotel compound to which road access has been blocked, said some 200 Ivorians had died in post-election violence and over 1,000 had been injured.

He added that ECOWAS, a group of West African states, had a duty to order a military intervention in Ivory Coast if Gbagbo did not step down by the end of January and said foreign powers should harden sanctions against the Gbagbo camp.

BBC Online

Wednesday, 5 January 2010

Ivory Coast: UN plans more peacekeepers



The BBC's Andrew Harding is threatened at gun-point on his way to interview Alassane Ouattara at his besieged hotel.

UN peacekeepers in Ivory Coast are sending a request to the Security Council for 1,000 to 2,000 more troops amid the continuing political crisis.

UN peacekeeping chief in Ivory Coast Alain Le Roy

said he hoped the troops would be available in a few weeks.

UN peacekeepers have been protecting a hotel in Abidjan that is sheltering Alassane Ouattara, the man recognised internationally as the new president.

Incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo has refused to cede power.

Mr Le Roy said the request for more troops would be made in the next few days.

He said they were needed because of the current force's additional duty of protecting the hotel.

Mr Le Roy also said the UN was facing more hostility because of what he called false reports on the Gbagbo-controlled media.

An estimated 10,000 UN troops are already in the country.

'No civil war'

A blockade remains around the hotel despite African mediators reporting on Tuesday that Mr Gbagbo had agreed to lift it.

On Wednesday his spokesman, Foreign Minister Alcide Djedje, said the blockade could only end if former rebels protecting Mr Ouattara left the building.

He said Mr Gbagbo had only agreed to study the conditions for lifting the blockade.

Mr Djedje said: "The Ivorian army feels it cannot tolerate that 300 heavily armed soldiers from the former rebellion should be in the hotel. That is a threat including for President Gbagbo whose residence is five minutes away by boat.

"If the [New Forces] soldiers go, the blockade will be lifted."



Alain Le Roy said the UN was facing more hostility in Ivory Coast

The north of the country is controlled by the New Forces, the former rebel movement that supports Mr Ouattara.

The 28 November election was intended to reunify the country - the world's leading cocoa producer - which has been divided since the 2002 conflict.

Reporters reached Mr Ouattara's hotel on Wednesday and he told them Mr Gbagbo had never been sincere in his offers.

"He has never been up to his commitments, he wants to gain time in order to bring in arms, ammunitions and mercenaries, because he wants to continue to stay in office but this will not work."

But Mr Ouattara insisted this did not mean there would be a civil war.

"No, it will not end in a war because clearly Ecowas will make the decisions quickly to remove him."

The West African regional body Ecowas has threatened to force Mr Gbagbo out, but is trying mediation efforts first.

Mr Ouattara said: "I want this to be clear: removing one person does not mean civil war."

He added: "My government and myself will stay here until he leaves the presidential offices, so we can go and work fully - as the Ivorian people have decided to put us in office."

Both men have been sworn in as president.

On Monday, Ecowas sent the presidents of Benin, Cape Verde and Sierra Leone to negotiate Mr Gbagbo's departure - their second attempt to do so in a week.

Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga, representing the African Union (AU), also attended.

The leaders told Mr Gbagbo to recognise Mr Ouattara as the elected leader of the country.

Mr Ouattara was initially proclaimed the winner by the country's election commission - a verdict backed by the UN, which helped organise the poll.

But the country's Constitutional Council, headed by an ally of Mr Gbagbo, later ruled that he had won, citing voting irregularities in the north.

Voice of America

Wednesday, 5 January 2011

Gbagbo Advisers Seek Dialogue to Revolve Ivorian Crisis

Peter Clottey



Photo: AP

Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo, right, with Kenya's Prime Minister Raila Odinga, left, Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma, center, after offering Laurent Gbagbo an amnesty deal at the presidential palace in Abidjan, 03 Jan 2011

A special adviser to embattled Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo said a team of advisers

will continue “reaching out” to former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara to organize a direct dialogue aimed at resolving the country’s political crisis.

Ambassador Yao Gnamien also denied reports the military, which backs Mr. Gbagbo, has been blocking all access to the Gulf Hotel, where former Prime Minister Ouattara and his advisers are staying.

“There has never been a blockade. The Gulf Hotel is very close to the residence, to the palace of President Gbagbo. So, President Gbagbo took some measures of protection of his home. This is why we are saying that nobody can do whatever (they) want near the White House, for instance, in Washington, D.C. So, we cannot say that it was a blockade,” said Ambassador Gnamien.

“Nobody can threaten anybody. So, they (supporters of Mr. Ouattara) are free to go and come. What the president wants is for them to leave the hotel and go home. They are free.”

Mr. Ouattara has ruled out any face-to-face dialogue until Mr. Gbagbo acknowledges that he lost the 28th November presidential run-off vote. African leaders have, so far, failed in several attempts to persuade Mr. Gbagbo to step down and hand over power to his rival, despite increasing international pressure.

The sub-regional bloc, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has threatened to use “legitimate force” to remove Mr. Gbagbo if he refuses to step down and cede power to his rival.

ECOWAS, together with the international community, recognizes Mr. Ouattara as winner of the presidential run-off vote.

Ambassador Gnamien said dialogue, without precondition, is the only way to resolve the ongoing crisis.

“If you are a politician, you can never say I will not negotiate. This is why we are inviting Prime Minister Ouattara and President Gbagbo to sit down before the international community. The international community will be like a judge,” said Ambassador Gnamien.

“We think that the best solution is to negotiate. All of his advisers like me have been trying to talk to Mr. Ouattara so that our two bosses can agree to sit down and negotiate and to find the solution. This is what President Gbagbo has asked us to do.”

Meanwhile, the United Nations says it needs 1,000 to 2,000 more troops in Ivory Coast amid post-election turmoil. Peacekeepers surround the hotel where Mr. Ouattara has his headquarters.

Hirondelle News Agency

Tuesday, 4 January 2011

First hearing of the year expected on January 10

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) will start the year 2011 with the hearing of Mathieu Ndirumutse's defense case. On January 10, former President of the ruling party in 1994 (MRND) will call to the stand new witnesses.

Former Vice-president of MRND, Edouard Karemera, the other defendant in this "joint trial" has already concluded his defense case. Both accused are charged with genocide and crimes against humanity, mainly for their "command responsibility" in crimes committed in 1994 by members of their party.

Ndirumutse and Karemera pleaded not guilty to the charges, arguing that the prosecution has not proved the existence of what is called-de jure or de facto - a link of subordination between the authors of the crimes and themselves. This trial is one of the slowest and the most complex in the ICTR history.

On January 17, another former member of Juvénal Habyarimana's government will resume his defense case. Augustin Ndirabatware, a son-in-law of alleged "banker of the genocide" Félicien Kabuga - was the Minister of Planning in 1994.

He is charged with genocide and crimes against humanity, notably for inciting massacres of Tutsis in his home town of Nyamyumba (Prefecture of Gisenyi). He pleads not guilty. Since the opening of his defense case on November 16, 2010, he has provided with defence of alibi that the prosecution is now challenging.

Also on January 17, former mayor of Kivumu commune Grégoire Ndahimana will open his defense case. He is charged for his alleged role in the massacre of more than 2,000 Tutsis who had sought refuge at Nyange Parish in April 1994. According to the Prosecution, the mayor planned the church's slaughter jointly with several other officials.

In a separate development, the UN Security Council voted on December 22 a resolution presented by Austria which had been expected for months. The resolution sets up a new body to finish work of UN war crimes tribunals called the "International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals", with two branches.

According to a UN Press Release, "The Mechanism's branch for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) will begin functioning on July 1, 2012, while the branch for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) will commence on July 1, 2013".

To ensure a smooth transition to the Mechanism, the Council is urging both tribunals to take "all possible measures" to complete all their remaining work no later than December 31, 2014.

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The New Times (Kigali)

Thursday, 6 January 2011

Rwanda: Genocide Charges Against Mbarushimana Still Stand-Karugarama

James Karuhanga

Kigali — Despite the decision by France's highest court to sanction the extradition of Callixte Mbarushimana to the International Criminal Court (ICC), the government has said that outstanding charges on his role in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi still remain.

This was revealed yesterday to The New Times by the Minister of Justice - who is also the Attorney General - Tharcisse Karugarama.

Mbarushimana was arrested last October on an ICC warrant for atrocities committed in DRC by the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) a militia group he served as its Executive Secretary.

"Our charges (against Mbarushimana) on Genocide cannot be diminished by the fact that he is being tried for war crimes by the ICC - these are two separate cases and one does not affect the other," said Karugarama.

He is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2009.

"On the contrary, it is good that one of the cases has actually taken off," the minister continued to say.

"Genocide offences do not expire - there is no contradiction at all. When we get him, we will try him. Now that they have him, let them try him".

Government and international rights activists want him tried for Genocide, saying that like many other figures at the helm of FDLR, in 1994, Mbarushimana played a major role in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

When the Genocide began on 7 April 1994, Mbarushimana was a computer technician with UNDP, in Kigali.

In 2001, the UN conducted its own investigation and linked Mbarushimana with the murder of 32 people, including Tutsi colleagues at the UNDP, during the Genocide.

"What we hope for is simply that the extradition of Mbarushimana to the ICC, which is a good thing, does not allow him to escape the French justice which has started investigating him," said Alain Gauthier, head of CPCR, one of the rights groups.

"His extradition is likely to be swift, but we will not fail to ask the judge who was investigating him what his (next) intentions are," he said.

WeNews

Thursday, 6 January 2011

<http://www.womensenews.org/story/rape/110105/bemba-icc-trial-showcases-war-rape-prosecution>

Bemba ICC Trial Showcases War-Rape Prosecution

By Amy Lieberman

Jean-Pierre Bemba's trial marks the first time that sexual violence is central to an International Criminal Court case. But so far, few female victims in the Central African Republic are giving testimony and many charges have been dropped.

UNITED NATIONS (WOMENSENEWS)-- The prosecution of Jean-Pierre Bemba, which resumes Jan. 11 in The Hague, is expected to continue taking testimony about the sexual violence committed by his troops in the Central African Republic between 2002 and 2003.



Former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan (right) meets with Jean-Pierre Bemba.

Credit: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

The trial marks the first major prosecution of rape as a weapon of war and a fulfillment of years of international legal advocacy for female war victims.

Three of the four witnesses who testified in Bemba's trial between Nov. 22 and Dec. 6 recounted rapes by Bemba's Congolese troops.

"Witness 38" described watching a young girl get raped in front of her mother. "Witness 22" described getting gang raped by three soldiers while her family was held captive in another room, according to testimony posted on the monitoring site BembaTrial.org.

But despite the focus on rape, Brigid Inder is worried about aspects of the somewhat showcase trial.

Inder is the executive director of Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, a nongovernmental group based in The Hague that looks out for women's interests in trials at the International Criminal Court, known as the ICC.

Two Troubling Stats

So far, her group is troubled by two trial statistics.

No. 1: Forty percent of the charges of sexual violence were dropped before the trial commenced at the end of November because the judge said they were redundant with existing charges.

No. 2: Only 39 percent of the 1,051 victims whose testimonies have been approved in the Bemba trial are female.

"It doesn't represent a lack of interest by women to participate or to seek justice, nor a diminished desire for accountability," Inder told Women's eNews in an interview in New York. "The ICC has overlooked the importance of developing good relationships with women leaders in conflict communities."

The International Criminal Court's public affairs office didn't reply to e-mail requests for comment.

Arrested in May 2008, Bemba is being charged with war crimes for allowing his troops to murder, pillage and rape in the Central African Republic between 2002 and 2003.

Bemba, vice president of the Democratic Republic of Congo from 2003 to 2006 and leader of the opposition group Movement for the Liberation of Congo, was called in with his rebel group to neighboring Central African Republic by its president, Ange-Felix Patasse, to fight off an attempted coup.

Dropped Charges Minimize Trauma

Mariana Goetz, International Criminal Court program advisor of REDRESS Trust, a London-based organization that aids torture survivors, is also closely watching the trial.

She says the dropped charges of sexual violence and the exclusion of torture charges are minimizing the trauma suffered by Bemba's alleged victims.

Sexual violence victims from the Central African Republic were frequently raped collectively in public spaces and in front of friends and family as a terror tactic, Goetz said.

Court appearances can be dangerous for victims and witnesses. For that reason, only three victims have appeared before the International Criminal Court since its establishment in 2002.

More than 600 victim applications are still pending in the Bemba case. Approval gives victims the right to participate through written testimony and to potentially receive reparations. It does not require a court appearance.

Two lawyers from the Central African Republic are representing the 1,051 victims, who are categorized by geographic location but not by the nature of human rights abuses, says Inder.