

**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, 2 February 2011

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

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Reuters

Wednesday, 2 February 2011

Liberia's Taylor to be called witness in arms case



AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - A court hearing the case of a Dutch businessman accused of smuggling arms to Liberia said on Tuesday it would call the country's former president Charles Taylor, currently on trial for war crimes at The Hague, as witness.

The court in Den Bosch agreed on Tuesday to a request by the defence of Guus Kouwenhoven, who is accused of smuggling arms to Taylor's government between 2001 and 2003 in contravention of U.N. sanctions, to call on Taylor at a date to be determined.

A Dutch court sentenced Kouwenhoven in 2006 to eight years in jail after finding him guilty of the smuggling charges but acquitted him of war crimes for lack of evidence. An appeals court then acquitted Kouwenhoven of arms dealing in 2008.

But last year the Dutch Supreme Court quashed the lower court's decision to acquit Kouwenhoven and ordered a new appeal hearing. The next pre-trial hearing in the process is scheduled for March 1 at the court in Den Bosch.

Known as "Big Gus" in Liberia, the former executive of the Oriental Timber Corp. and the Royal Timber Co. was accused of selling arms in exchange for timber concessions in Liberia, dubbed the "blood timber" trade by campaigners.

The charges stem from Liberia's civil war that started in 1989, spilled across borders, killed a quarter of a million people and spawned a generation of child soldiers.

Taylor has been on trial at the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague since June 2007, facing 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. A judgement in his case is expected this year.

Voice of America
Monday, 31 January 2011

ICC Prosecutor Under Fire as African Union Backs Kenya

Michael Onyiego



Photo: AP

President of the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Christian Wenaweser, speaks about Kenya's quest to seek deferral of cases against six prominent Kenyans in connection with country's post election violence, in Nairobi, Kenya, January 28, 2011

International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo is under fire as the African Union backs Kenya in its bid to stall trials aimed at the country's election violence.

Once viewed in Kenya as a hero, ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo is now under fire in Africa, as the country moves forward with plans to forgo its own proceedings at the international court.

The prosecutor was, just months prior, seen as Kenya's only hope for justice. After naming surprise suspects in his two cases probing Kenya's violence, however, he has been accused of being "drunk with power" by Kenyan politicians.

The African Union is now jumping into the fire. Speaking at the A.U. Summit in Addis Ababa over the weekend, Chairman Jean Ping assured the Court of African support, but accused Moreno-Ocampo of bias. Ping highlighted the lack of court action in Gaza, Iraq and Burma (Myanmar) as evidence of a double-standard against African states.

On Sunday, the Executive Council of the African Union endorsed Kenya's request for deferral. The Summit will close Monday with a final session involving Africa's leaders. If the session produces support for Kenya, the continental body could then

submit a formal request to the U.N. Security Council. Last week, the leader of the International Criminal Court's member states, President of the Assembly of States Parties Christian Wenaweser, warned against such a course of action.

"I have made it quite clear that from the perspective of the States Parties this would be a far more problematic course of action that has a number of legal and political pitfalls," said Wenaweser. "First of all, it would not be an expression of continued cooperation with the court by the Kenyan government. It would also implicitly be a statement that the situation here poses a threat to international peace and security."

In its bid to defer the Kenyan trial, leaders in Nairobi are arguing for a local mechanism to deal with the violence.

Wenaweser expressed support for the local efforts, but urged Kenya to work with the court, rather than around it. The Liechtensteiner diplomat told reporters the ICC judges also could grant Kenya a deferral if evidence of substantial efforts made towards a local mechanism were presented.

Kenya attempted to address the 2007-2008 post-election chaos through the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, established in 2009. Despite many hopes, an ethics scandal engulfed its chairman and the commission never began work. Many politicians believe the judicial reforms envisioned in the new constitution will help address the violence.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 2 February 2011

RTL M ghost looms over Kenya

By Linawati Sidarto



Nairobi, Kenya

Radio journalist Joshua Arap Sang was the only non-politician among the six Kenyans named by the International Criminal Court in December as the alleged masterminds of the country's post-election violence.

Experts, however, warn against comparisons between Kenya's Kass FM and Rwanda's notorious RTL M.

In his long awaited announcement, ICC Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo described Sang as "a prominent member of the community, due to his position as a broadcaster on the most popular vernacular radio station, Kass FM." Ocampo accused him of crimes against humanity in the mass violence following Kenya's elections in December 2007, which left 1,300 people dead and more than 300,000 displaced. "Sang used coded language disseminated through radio broadcasts to help coordinate the attacks," Ocampo said.

Kass FM is among Kenya's many vernacular radio stations, broadcasting in Kalenjin, one of the dozens of languages spoken in the country. It boasts to be the leading radio station in the Rift Valley region - a hot spot during the post-election violence - with five million daily listeners. Most Kalenjins are supporters of the Orange Democratic Party, which contested the outcome of the elections won by rival Party of National Unity.

Sang, host of a morning talk show, "is the most influential among the Kass announcers. If he said something, people would notice," said Keith Somerville, journalism lecturer at the UK's Brunel University. "If he interviews a politician, people would say: he was on Sang's programme, so it must be OK. For his language community he was a trusted voice."

The broadcaster has refuted all the allegations, and continues to host his show "which remains immensely popular, if not even more so after the ICC revelation," a Nairobi-based radio journalist said. ICC judges will come out with a decision sometime in March as to whether there is enough evidence to start a trial against the six men.

Somerville pointed to the difficulty of proving that Sang incited violence, given that there is virtually no monitoring on vernacular radio and that there are few transcripts available of the show. "The problem is that there's such little transcript material available."

For many, the assertions against Sang conjure up memories of Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines and its role in the 1994 Rwanda genocide. Political scientist Scott Strauss of the US' University of Wisconsin worries that the media is singled out in violence cases due to the RTLM precedent. "My experience with these media cases is that prosecutors choose them because it's something that audiences around the world can easily understand because of RTLM."

Thierry Cruvallier, a journalist who wrote a book on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda trials, expressed the same trepidation: "There's certainly a risk that a court like the ICC takes on such a case for the symbol it stands for rather than the seriousness of the evidence."

Somerville draws a clear line between RTLM and Kass FM, pointing out that the former was "clearly set up with a purpose. Over a long period of time, since it started until the time of the genocide, it fed a constant diet of dehumanising Tutsis. You certainly didn't get that consistency of message from Kass."

Kass FM is more comparable to something like the US' Fox TV, which is often accused of propagating conservative ideas, Somerville says. "Media outlets in western countries also often represent a particular viewpoint. But in a country like Kenya, one doesn't have the recourse to the rule of law like we do in Western Europe."

He further points out that key problems in Kenya's vernacular radio is a lack of professionalism. "Sometimes inflammatory material is broadcast because the stations don't have the expertise to deal with controversial subjects." Journalists in Kenya also do not enjoy proper legal protection, Somerville says. "If a powerful politician walks in your door and demands air time, who will dare to say 'no'?"

Senior Kenyan journalist Horace Awori stressed that "hate speech still takes place because the culture of impunity still exists. " Awori further said that "strict codes of conduct for practitioners with severe penalties are needed both for the media personnel and politicians in particular. Those to enforce these measures need to be empowered and to be independent."

Reuters

Wednesday, 2 February 2011

Bosnian police arrest Sarajevo war crimes suspect



Bosnian police have arrested a Bosnian Serb accused of murder, rape and intimidation of Muslims in the capital Sarajevo during the 1992-95 war, the prosecutor's office said on Tuesday.

Sasa Baricanin, 41, was arrested by the State

Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) in the Bosnian Serb wartime stronghold of Pale, near the capital, the office said in a statement.

It said that Baricanin was under investigation by the state court's special war crimes division on suspicion of committing crimes against humanity in the Sarajevo neighbourhoods of Grbavica and Pale in 1992.

It said he was an accomplice of Veselin Vlahovic, also known as "Batko", a former Serb soldier suspected of hundreds of murders, rapes and tortures in Sarajevo. He was arrested last year in Spain and delivered to the Bosnian court.

"Baricanin is suspected of committing murder, rape, robberies and intimidation of Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) civilians in the Sarajevo neighbourhoods of Grbavica and Vraca together with Vlahovic," the office said.

Vlahovic, 41, who was born in Montenegro, had three pending international arrest warrants. He was arrested on charges ranging from armed robbery to burglary and had been jailed after the Bosnian war for an armed robbery in Montenegro in 1998.

Bosnian Serbs, backed by the former Yugoslav army, launched a bloody ethnic cleansing campaign in April 1992 and within a few months captured almost three-quarters of the country and encircled Sarajevo where an estimated 10,000 people died during the three-and-a-half year siege.

An official close to the Vlahovic investigation said the prosecution is wrapping up the inquiry, seen as one of its most extensive, and would most likely result in an indictment against Vlahovic and his accomplices within a month.

The Bosnian war crimes court was set up in Sarajevo in 2005 to relieve the workload of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague.

The Associated Press

Tuesday, 1 February 2011

Arab lawyers call for support for Hariri tribunal

THE HAGUE, Netherlands -- Arab lawyers have called on Lebanon and the rest of the Arab world to embrace the U.N.-backed tribunal set up to prosecute the assassins of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

Lawyers from the Arab world are meeting to discuss the Special Tribunal for Lebanon as the court prepares to publish the first indictment - expected within a few weeks - naming suspects in the 2005 truck bombing that killed Hariri and 22 others.

Mohammed Ayat, a senior legal advisor to the prosecutor of the Rwanda Tribunal, told Tuesday's conference the Arab world "cannot be a simple observer" in international efforts to prosecute atrocities.

There are fears that Shiite militant group Hezbollah will block the tribunal's work after its candidate was named Lebanon's new prime minister.