

**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:

Tuesday, 8 February 2011

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 5 February 2011

Final Arguments in the Taylor trial on 8, 9 and 11 February 2011

Final arguments in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor will take place on 8, 9 and 11 February in The Hague, beginning at 9:00 a.m. local time.

Charles Taylor is charged with an 11 count indictment which alleges that he was responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by rebels in Sierra Leone during the country's decade-long civil conflict. He has pleaded not guilty to all counts.

The closing arguments will be streamed over the internet beginning at 9:30 a.m. Hague time (8:30 a.m. GMT), with the link accessible from the Court's website, www.sc-sl.org. The proceedings will also be streamed via satellite to the Special Court complex in Freetown beginning at 8:30 a.m. The public and press is invited to attend.

During the trial, the Prosecution called 94 witnesses, while 21 persons testified for the Defence, including Mr. Taylor himself. After the completion of the closing arguments, the Judges will retire to consider the Trial Judgment. The Judgment is expected in mid-2011.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

Final argument in Taylor's trial

Final arguments in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor is taking place today in The Hague, beginning at 9:00 a.m. local time.

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Outreach and Public Affairs Office

Agence France-Presse

Sunday, 6 February 2011

Liberian ex-president's war crimes trial enters final phase

THE HAGUE, The Netherlands—Charles Taylor's war crimes trial enters its final phase on Tuesday after three years of gripping, often gruesome, testimony on the Liberian ex-president's alleged warmongering in Sierra Leone.

Prosecutor Brenda Hollis will present her closing arguments to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, insisting that Taylor armed rebels who staged one of the most brutal conflicts in modern times, in exchange for illegally mined diamonds.

"Charles Taylor created, armed, supported, and controlled the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in a ten-year campaign of terror" that claimed some 120,000 lives until 2001, states the prosecution's final trial brief.

Thousands of civilians had limbs severed in one of history's bloodiest civil wars, which Taylor started "by sending ammunition, weapons, and manpower to the RUF and its allies," according to the prosecution.

"The crimes suffered by the people of Sierra Leone would not have occurred but for Taylor's supervision and support for the RUF."

Taylor, 62, received "mayonnaise jars" of so-called blood diamonds from the RUF, a handful of which he presented to supermodel Naomi Campbell at a charity dinner in South Africa in 1997, according to testimony before the court.

"Many millions of dollars worth of ... diamonds, most mined by civilians under conditions amounting to slavery, were delivered to Taylor," states the prosecution brief.

Lawyers for Taylor, who has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, will present their closing arguments on Wednesday, followed by two hours of rebuttal for each side on Friday.

The judges will then retire to consider their judgment but the court's verdict is not expected before the middle of the year.

The trial started in earnest in January 2008 in The Hague for fear that Taylor's presence in Sierra Leone, where the tribunal is based, could destabilize the region.

The judges have heard gruesome testimony from victims of the conflict, including a witness who said he pleaded with RUF rebels to cut off his remaining hand so they would spare his toddler son.

Others said Taylor's fighters strung human intestines across roads, removed fetuses from the womb and practiced cannibalism.

Taylor dismisses the charges as "lies," denies having received any diamonds, and rejects testimony that he had eaten human flesh.

But he saw nothing wrong with human skulls displayed at military checkpoints, the former president told the court.

Former chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp has said he was confident of a conviction and was anticipating "close to a life sentence" for Taylor, the first African head of state to be tried before an international court.

The court has heard evidence from 94 prosecution witnesses and 21 for the defense, and has admitted 1,093 exhibits. The trial transcript is more than 49,000 pages long.

Agence France Presse

Tuesday, 8 February 2011

Charles Taylor driven by "greed", court told

Charles Taylor was driven by greed and power lust in arming rebels who terrorised Sierra Leone citizens in a brutal civil war, judges trying the Liberian ex-president were told on Tuesday.

"All these atrocities to feed the greed and lust for power of Charles Taylor," prosecutor Brenda Hollis said in closing arguments before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, going through the list of charges against him.

"Charles Taylor bears the greatest responsibility for the horrific crimes committed against the people of Sierra Leone through the campaign of terror inflicted on them," Hollis told Taylor's warcrimes trial in Leidschendam, near The Hague.

The prosecution claims Taylor, described by Hollis as an "intelligent, charismatic manipulator", armed Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels who staged one of the most brutal conflicts in modern times, in exchange for illegally mined diamonds.

The Sierra Leone civil war claimed some 120,000 lives in the 10 years to 2001, with RUF rebels mutilating thousands of civilians who had their hands and arms severed.

"Charles Ghankay Taylor was in charge of, put in place, directed, nurtured and supported the campaign of terror," said Hollis, all "to forcibly control the people and territory of Sierra Leone ... its resources, in particular its diamonds.

Taylor, 62, received "mayonnaise jars" of so-called blood diamonds from the RUF, a handful of which he presented to supermodel Naomi Campbell at a charity dinner in South Africa in 1997, according to testimony before the court.

Taylor, whose lawyer stormed out of the court on Tuesday to protest the judges' refusal to pardon the late filing of a document, has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The defence was scheduled to present its closing arguments on Wednesday, followed by two hours of rebuttal for each side on Friday.

The judges will then retire to consider their judgment, expected in mid-2011.

Taylor's trial, the first ever for an African head of state in an international tribunal, started in earnest in January 2008.

Associated Press

Tuesday, 8 February 2011

Charles Taylor's lawyer storms out of court

By MIKE CORDER

LEIDSCHENDAM, Netherlands -- Calling the trial "a farce," Charles Taylor's lawyer stormed out of court Tuesday after judges refused to accept a written summary of the former Liberian president's defense at the end of his landmark war crimes case.

British attorney Courtenay Griffiths ignored judges at the Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone who ordered him to stay in court after unprecedented angry exchanges erupted before closing arguments in the three-year case.

"How will posterity judge the credibility of this court if, at this 11th hour, they prevented Mr. Taylor from presenting ... 90 percent of his closing arguments?" Griffiths said outside court. "We have decided not to participate in these closing arguments because as far as we are concerned it is a complete farce."

But prosecutor Brenda Hollis argued that neither Taylor nor his lawyers had the right to walk out.

"The accused is not attending a social event. He may not R.S.V.P. at the last minute," Hollis said. "He is the accused at a criminal proceeding."

Taylor himself remained in court as Hollis began summing up the prosecution case.

The courtroom fireworks were ignited Monday, when the three-judge panel issued a majority decision rejecting Taylor's final brief in which his lawyers summed up their defense case, because it was filed 20 days after their Jan. 14 deadline.

Ugandan Judge Julia Sebutinde dissented, warning that refusing to accept Taylor's brief "is to deny him his fundamental right to defend himself."

Griffiths said he would file an appeal later Tuesday against the trial chamber's decision to reject the summation. He said he would not appear in court Wednesday as scheduled to present his closing arguments.

Griffiths argued earlier that he could not submit the defense summary on time because the court had not ruled on several outstanding motions, including one challenging the U.N.-backed court's independence based on diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks.

In one leaked cable from the U.S. Embassy in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, diplomats warned that if Taylor is acquitted and returns to Liberia it could destabilize the country's fragile peace.

"The best we can do for Liberia is to see to it that Taylor is put away for a long time" said the cable, dated March 10, 2009. It also suggested that building a case against Taylor in the U.S. could be one way of ensuring he does not return to Liberia should he be acquitted by the Sierra Leone tribunal.

Griffiths said the cable showed the tribunal is not independent "because the Americans are already putting in place contingency plans so if Mr. Taylor is acquitted they will put him on trial again in the United States."

Taylor, the first former African head of state to be tried by an international court, has pleaded innocent to 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, torture and using child soldiers.

Prosecutors allege he armed and supported brutal rebels responsible for many of the worst atrocities of Sierra Leone's civil war, which left tens of thousands of people dead and many more mutilated after enemy fighters hacked off their limbs, noses or lips.

Continuing to sum up her case in Griffiths' absence, Hollis laid the blame for the atrocities firmly at Taylor's feet, saying he used the rebels to pillage Sierra Leone's mineral wealth and in particular its diamonds.

"Charles Taylor, this intelligent, charismatic manipulator, had his proxy forces ... carry out these crimes against helpless victims in Sierra Leone," she said. "All this suffering, all these atrocities, to feed the greed and lust for power of Charles Taylor."

Hollis reviewed for the judges some of the war's worst atrocities as described by witnesses, including a villager forced to carry a sack full of severed heads, and "civilians being forced to watch as a child is buried alive and the mother is forced to laugh."

Taylor and his rebels "were the gods," Hollis said. "They decided life, they decided death."

Taylor, however, in months testifying on his own behalf, cast himself as a statesman who tried to pacify Western Africa.

Taylor boycotted the opening of his trial in June 2007 and fired his defense team, saying he had not had enough time to prepare his defense. The trial got under way again six months later with the first witness.

"We have seen this attempt at manipulation of the proceedings at the beginning and now we are seeing it at the end," Hollis said.

The Tibet Post International

Tuesday, 8 February 2011

Liberian War Crimes Trial Loses Defence

By Carly Selby-James

Dharamshala: Liberia's former president Charles Taylor has lost his defence lawyer while in the closing stages of his war crimes trial in the Hague.

Mr. Taylor faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. He is accused of arming and controlling the vicious Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in neighbouring Sierra Leone, notorious for the mutilation of thousands of civilians in the 1990s, and of selling 'blood diamonds' which he received from the rebels as payment for providing them with weapons.

More than 100 witnesses have been heard during the trial, including actress Mia Farrow and supermodel Naomi Campbell, who allegedly received several uncut diamonds as a gift in 1997.

The trial began in June 2007 and is the first international trial of a former African Head of State to take place. If convicted, Mr. Taylor will face a prison sentence in the U.K. The trial is expected to draw to a close later this year.

BBC Online

Tuesday, 8 February 2011

The charges against Charles Taylor



Liberia's former President Charles Ghankay Taylor is on trial on 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in the Hague.

He is accused of funding Sierra Leone's former rebels, the Revolutionary United Front, by selling diamonds on their behalf and buying weapons for them.

RUF fighters were notorious for hacking off the arms and legs of the civilian population with machetes, as well as killing, raping and robbing them.

Here are the charges:

CAH = Crimes Against Humanity

WC = Violation of Article 3 Common to the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II (war crimes)

VIHL = Other serious violation of international humanitarian law

Terrorising the civilian population and collective punishments

1 Acts of terrorism (WC)

Unlawful killings

2 Murder (CAH)

3 Violence to life, health and physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular murder (WC)

Sexual violence

4 Rape (CAH)

5 Sexual slavery and any other form of sexual violence (CAH)

6 Outrages upon personal dignity (WC)

Physical violence

7 Violence to life, health and physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular cruel treatment (WC)

8 Other inhumane acts (CAH)

Use of child soldiers

9 Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into armed forces or groups, or using them to participate actively in hostilities (VIHL)

Abductions and forced labour

10 Enslavement (CAH)

Looting

11 Pillage (WC)

Charles Taylor Trial: Prosecution Closing Arguments

When prosecutors make their closing arguments on Tuesday, February 8, 2011, they will likely argue the following:

The 11-year campaign of terror unleashed by rebels, who marauded their way across Sierra Leone, raping, killing and hacking off the limbs of women, men and children alike, was directed by former Liberian president, Charles Taylor. He is charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law for crimes committed during Sierra Leone's civil conflict.

Prosecutors allege that Taylor was involved in a criminal plan with Sierra Leonean rebel leader, Foday Sankoh, which aimed at controlling the country's resources and territory. They say Sankoh and Taylor first formed this plan in the 1980s, when they were both at a revolutionary training camp in Libya, hosted by Muammar Gaddafi. The two then allegedly set out on a campaign of devastation that ended, finally, in 2002. The violence was fueled in large part by Sierra Leone's diamond wealth. Sankoh's group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), would allegedly bring Taylor diamonds from Sierra Leone and, in exchange, Taylor would supply the rebels with the arms and ammunition used to perpetrate crimes.

Taylor had such influence over the rebels, prosecutors say, that he was effectively the RUF commander. As such, they say he should be held responsible for its crimes, because he should have known about them, was in a position to prevent them, or punish people for them, and yet failed to do so. For his role in planning, ordering, instigating, aiding and abetting the commission of crimes, prosecutors say, Taylor bears the greatest responsibility for the conflict.

In closing argument, prosecutors will likely make these points:

1. Taylor created and controlled the RUF, first by assisting with their training in Liberia and then by providing manpower to fuel the invasion of Sierra Leone in 1991.
2. Taylor contributed to the crimes in Sierra Leone by stocking the rebels' arsenal with arms and ammunition.
3. Taylor played a role in looting diamonds from Sierra Leone by providing the RUF with materials and specific instructions to control the diamond mines in the country.
4. With his influence and leadership over the RUF, Taylor had knowledge of RUF crimes in Sierra Leone but failed to prevent and punish the crimes committed.
5. Taylor used his influence and leadership to send RUF surrogates to attack neighboring Guinea and to oppose rebel forces in Liberia, in an effort to consolidate control and influence over the sub-region.
6. Taylor hid himself under the cloak of a peacemaker and tried to conceal his role in the crimes by eliminating people who knew about his relationship with the Sierra Leonean rebels. Those executed on Taylor's orders included high-level RUF commanders.
7. The Sierra Leonean rebel group was basically an extension of Taylor's own rebel group in Liberia. Fighters from both groups crossed into each other's territory and provided needed support. The two groups had one leader—Charles Taylor.

Charles Taylor Trial: Defense Closing Arguments

When the defense makes its closing argument on Wednesday, February 9, 2011, they will likely argue the following:

Charles Taylor is a peacemaker turned scapegoat. Wanting to bring stability to the region, Taylor acted at the behest of West African states and the United Nations to broker peace between the warring factions in neighboring Sierra Leone. He also negotiated with rebels to free abducted United Nations peacekeepers and ushered one of the most prominent rebel leaders out of Sierra Leone to help calm the conflict.

The defense argues that Taylor's trial is "political" because others—such as then Sierra Leonean president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah—bore the greatest responsibility for the crimes. But Taylor's role in the conflict, they claim, has been skewed to suggest he was the one most responsible for the atrocities. The defense also maintains that Taylor's indictment suited western powers, such as the United States and United Kingdom, who wanted "regime change" in Liberia.

Throughout the trial, Taylor was defended by a charismatic Jamaican-born British barrister, Courtenay Griffiths, who speckled his opening statement with Bob Marley lyrics. (Griffiths accused the case's first prosecutor of "working iniquity to achieve vanity.")

Taylor's defense will likely make the following key points:

1. Taylor was a peacemaker, whose dealings with the Sierra Leonean rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) had the blessings of other West African leaders, who gave him a mandate to help bring the conflict in Sierra Leone to an end by peaceful means.
2. RUF commanders probably had dealings with Taylor's security apparatus, but these relationships were not with Taylor's knowledge and support.
3. The West African region had become so rife with conflict, with different factions controlling territory on both Sierra Leone's and Liberia's borders, that allegations that Taylor could easily send arms and ammunition from Liberia to Sierra Leone are fanciful.
4. RUF commanders in fact bought arms and ammunition from others, including Taylor's own rivals. Sources of weapons for the RUF included Guinean soldiers, Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeepers, as well as United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO), a rival rebel group to Taylor's own forces, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia.
5. Witnesses testified against Taylor because they were paid huge amounts of money by the prosecution. Some were also relocated to Western countries because of their testimonies.
6. Taylor is on trial because of a conspiracy by Western countries like the United States and Britain who want to keep him out of Liberia.

Where to From Here? An Overview of the Taylor Trial

The trial of Charles Taylor boils down to one key question: was the former Liberian president behind the mayhem and crimes committed in neighboring Sierra Leone? This week, as the first international trial of a former African head of state draws to a close, prosecutors and defense lawyers will have one final chance to convince the judges of Taylor's guilt or innocence.

The closing arguments mark the end of three years of testimony before the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Open Society Justice Initiative (www.justiceinitiative.org) has been monitoring the trial since it began, filing daily news and analysis on our blog, www.charlestaylortrial.org.

In June 2006, the UN Security Council resolved to move the Taylor trial from Sierra Leone to The Hague because of security concerns. Then, after an initial false start in July 2007 when Taylor failed to appear for the opening of the case and fired his lawyers, the case began in earnest—with a new defense team—in January 2008. A total of 115 witnesses testified between January 2008 and November 2010. Of those, 94 witnesses were called by the prosecution and 21 have testified for the defense.

Among the most high profile were supermodel Naomi Campbell and actress Mia Farrow, who were brought in by the prosecution in an attempt to show that Taylor was knowingly trading weapons in exchange for diamonds. Allegations that Taylor sent rough cut diamonds to Campbell after a star-studded dinner in 1997, hosted by former South African president, Nelson Mandela, were used by prosecutors to try to link Taylor to the diamonds themselves and then to a weapons shipment that landed in Sierra Leone a month later. (Taylor said he never possessed diamonds during his presidency beyond his personal jewelry and that he had nothing to do with the shipment.)

After next week's closing arguments, the Court will issue its judgment, expected before the end of 2011. The judgment will determine whether enough evidence was presented to find Taylor guilty on each of the 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. (Taylor is presumed innocent until proven otherwise, and it is the burden of the prosecutor to prove his guilt beyond reasonable doubt before judges can make a decision to convict.)

If Taylor is convicted of any or all of the charges, the Special Court for Sierra Leone will then hold a hearing to determine Taylor's sentence. Under the terms of the Court's statute, any prison sentence must be for a specific number of years. The United Kingdom has offered to imprison Taylor if he is found guilty. If Taylor is found not guilty, he will be acquitted and released as a free man.

No matter what the trial judgment, an appeal of the case by one or both sides is likely. The court's Appeals Chamber then will decide on those points of appeal. An appeals judgment, if a challenge is filed, is likely to be handed down sometime in 2012.

Charles Taylor Trial: Timeline

June 4, 2003: The prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone announces an indictment against Charles Taylor.

August 11, 2003: Taylor steps down as president of Liberia and goes into exile in Calabar, Nigeria.

March 26, 2006: Taylor is apprehended and delivered into the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

June 30, 2006: Taylor is transferred to The Hague, where the trial is to be conducted by Special Court for Sierra Leone judges.

June 4, 2007: The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court makes his opening statement. Taylor refuses to attend, dismisses his legal team, and asserts that he does not have enough resources to conduct his defense.

January 7, 2008: The trial begins in earnest with the prosecution bringing its first witness against Taylor.

February 27, 2009: After calling 91 witnesses to testify against Taylor, prosecutors conclude the presentation of their case.

July 13, 2009: Taylor's lead defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, delivers his opening statement, thus officially opening Taylor's defense.

July 14, 2009-Feb. 19, 2010: Charles Taylor testifies as a witness in his own defense. He is on the stand for about seven months.

August 5, 2010: British supermodel Naomi Campbell testifies in The Hague about allegations that she received rough diamonds from Taylor in South Africa in 1997.. Campbell's testimony was followed by those of her former agent Carole White and Hollywood actress Mia Farrow.

November 12 2010: After calling 21 witnesses to testify for Charles Taylor, defense lawyers formally closed their defense on behalf of the former Liberian president.

February 8-11 2011: Prosecution and defense lawyers present their closing arguments.

Moving forward: The Trial Chamber judges will retire to deliberate on the evidence presented to them by both parties and then deliver their final judgment. This final process could take several months.

Mail Online

Monday, 7 February 2011

I was like a mother to Naomi Campbell, I won't talk to her now

As she lays bare the modelling world in a new TV series, Naomi Campbell's former agent Carole White spills the beans...

Flirting with rich, dubious, famous and infamous men. Chronic lateness and stropic behaviour. Freebies of the most extravagant, dangerous kind. If there was one story that emerged last year to expose the fashion industry for what it really is, it was the Blood Diamonds trial.

Naomi Campbell turned up at court in a virginal cream twinset and reminded us all what a difficult, otherworldly being the supermodel really is as she obfuscated, and said she had no idea the dirty little stones were gems.

'Blood Diamonds' are stones that are traded to buy arms. Last August, Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia, was standing trial at the Hague for war crimes, and an important part of the case for the prosecution was that he had smuggled diamonds out of Sierra Leone to pay for weapons in the civil war, some of which ended up in the hands of the supermodel.



Parted company: Carole White no longer represents model Naomi Campbell, who she said became changed by the fashion industry

The use of stones to buy arms is a grubby, far-flung trade that was suddenly given a sheen of glamour by the appearance of Naomi Campbell in the stand. Campbell was an unwilling witness: she had to be subpoenaed, and even then she rather predictably turned up late.

In her evidence, delivered in the hushed, transatlantic drawl she has cultivated over the years, the model then proceeded to give her version of the events of the night of September 25, 1997, when she had

dined with both Taylor and Nelson Mandela in South Africa.

By the next morning, she woke up with a pouch of 'dirty little stones'. But her story of how she came about them, that two men simply 'turned up at her bedroom door', and that it only occurred to her the next day that the stones might have been a gift from the former dictator, was contradicted as lies by the woman who for more than 20 years had been, in Naomi's words, her 'surrogate mother', and who had sat at her charge's side that night over dinner. That woman is her agent, Carole White.

I meet White at her office in Covent Garden, where tables heave with art books, and photos of the most beautiful women in the world paper every square inch of the white-washed walls. This is the HQ of Premier Model Management.

As an agent to virtually every super in the world (from Christy Turlington to Linda Evangelista and Claudia Schiffer) bar Kate Moss, Carole is far more used to being in the background than having her pale, anxious face shown on TV news channels around the world.

Expert in the industry: Carole has also represented Christy Turlington, Linda Evangelista and Claudia Schiffer

'At first, I had no idea it was such a big deal,' she says. 'But when I got to Amsterdam, I was met off the plane by the chief of police, given four bodyguards, put in a bulletproof car and taken to a secret hotel. I was told I couldn't go out. It was all very James Bond. It was scary. All I knew was that I had to tell the truth.'

It must have been strange, though, testifying against Naomi, whom she had represented since the model was a gauche 18-year-old. (They parted company in 2008.) White testified that the model flirted with the former dictator over dinner, and arranged to accept the stones from two henchmen in the middle of the night.

'Naomi knew it was illegal to take diamonds that might have been used to fund atrocities. Why she denied what really happened I don't know. I suppose, having denied it, she couldn't retract. I thought, and Naomi agreed, "Let's just give them to charity", which she did [the model handed the stones over to a representative from one of Mandela's charities].

'We never knew what ultimately happened to the stones, but we both felt something good had come out of it. We had talked openly about what had happened, then thought nothing more of it.'

Did she speak to Naomi at the trial? 'No,' says the 60-year-old former model, who started Premier in 1981. 'We no longer speak. At all.'

Carole White is currently embroiled in yet another legal dispute with her former biggest-earning golden goose over a cosmetics deal. At the Blood Diamonds trial, this spat was brought up by lawyers as a reason for White to cast Naomi in a bad light.

At the trial in the Hague, Naomi came across as spoilt, reckless and stupid. What on earth happened to her? 'The industry and the lifestyle changed her,' says Carole. 'At



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16 she was mixing with actors, make-up artists, hairdressers, and they were all older than she was. In those days, it was always Concorde, you know?

'Naomi knew it was illegal to take diamonds that might have been used to fund atrocities. Why she denied what really happened I don't know'

'She became used to a luxury lifestyle, and once you're used to that you don't want to go back to economy. So money becomes important and your gauge of what's valuable is different, because you're staying in suites, you are meeting presidents such as Mandela and Clinton, tycoons such as Philip Green, and so everything is not normal.'

I can tell Carole still has a lot of affection for her former charge. 'Oh, I love Naomi,' she says. 'I love all my girls. And it's my job to look after them.'

Carole White is about to become a whole lot more notorious when, later this month, Channel 4 airs the first of a seven-part, fly-on-the-wall documentary *The Model Agency*.

I've seen the first episode, *New Faces*, and while it's entertaining, its depiction of a foul-mouthed world where children are treated as commodities will hardly inspire parents with leggy teens to come knocking on her door. Why did she agree to be filmed?

'Because it shows fashion is a business when people think it's a game. If you get it right you can make pots of money, and have an incredible lifestyle. I know models who speak three languages, they see the world, they do get an education. It's better than working in Tesco; you can do great things.'

In the first episode there is lots of wielding of tape measures around pale, adolescent midriffs, of course, an awful lot of bitching — 'He looks like a pig!' says a male booker flicking through a glossy magazine — and an awful lot of rejection.

'How tall are you?' another booker asks a nervous teen on the end of a phone. 'Five feet five.' The receiver is slammed down.

I meet Carole in her office the day before she is due to fly to New York for the current round of fashion shows, where presumably a new crop of children will be sacrificed on the altar of high fashion.



In court: Carole gave evidence against her former client during the Blood Diamonds trial last year

She says: 'We take our duty of care seriously. But girls freak out, mainly because of boyfriends. You'd think these girls would have handsome boyfriends, but they don't.

'They date short men who are insecure and who become very controlling as they fear losing these girls who are always travelling, always meeting new people. That can be a nightmare.'

I last met Carole in 2008, at the height of the 'size zero' debate. Carole had assured me that everyone was committed to change. I tell her that in the new documentary one of her male bookers remarked that a 5ft 11in blonde teenager was 'big boned'. Isn't it business as usual?

'What he meant was she won't photograph well. We have changed. I now look for girls with breasts, and that is something we wouldn't have countenanced ten years ago. Our biggest demand in the past two years has been for a D cup, but obviously you have to have a really fit body.

'Now, we talk to our models about nutrition, make sure they have a personal trainer. Even our language has changed. A decade ago, we would have just said: "Don't eat!" '

Just how lucrative is modelling for these new girls? 'If she is hot, and does the key shows in New York, London, Milan and Paris, she can earn £10,000 to £20,000.'

This sounds a lot of cash for four weeks' work, but it can mean 20 appointments a day — castings and fittings, as well as the shows themselves — straight off the plane. 'That's why I tell the girls they need to be as fit as Olympic athletes to make it,' Carole says. 'After New York, I have girls who are crying with exhaustion.'

'She became used to a luxury lifestyle, and once you're used to that you don't want to go back to economy'

She tells me the fees in London are the lowest on the circuit. 'The fee for an established designer is £370 per girl, per show. A new designer might pay a girl £100.'

Who pays for the flights, the hotels, the cars? 'We do, but it's an advance against the girl's earnings,' says Carole, who also takes a percentage of their earnings.

You can begin to see why these girls race from one show to the next, given the debt they are racking up, and might break down in tears in a strange city, prey to men circling like vultures.

'I agree 16 is very young. And while in London we stick to the rules, and don't use girls who are younger, that's not the case in New York, Milan and Paris. You will see girls cast for the big names who are 14. That will never change.'

Who are the hot girls heading to New York as we speak, who could be the next Kate or Naomi, and one day be able to sit on yachts with rich old men?

'We are always looking for English, home-grown girls,' Carole says, as though she is talking about tomatoes.

'There is Emily Wake, who looks like something out of the movie Avatar, with almond eyes. The girls have to be ethereal, like they were born in a different world. Only one in 10,000 has what it takes to be a model.'

These people really are, after all, on a -different planet.

Buffalo News

Wednesday, 2 February 2011

Sierra Leone prosecutor to deliver birthday address

WARREN, Pa.—David M. Crane, former chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, will give the keynote address at the annual commemoration of Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson's birthday in the county of his birth, Warren County, Pa.

Co-sponsored by the Robert H. Jackson Center and the Warren County Historical Society, Robert H. Jackson Day in Warren County will be held at 7 p.m. Feb. 10 in the Warren County Courthouse. It's free and open to the public.

Crane, a professor of law at Syracuse University, was the first American chief prosecutor at an international war crimes tribunal since Jackson served as chief judge at Nuremberg in 1945.

Daily Star (Lebanon)

Saturday, 5 February 2011

Hague conference stresses tribunal does not infringe on sovereignty

BEIRUT: The Hague was the venue this week for a two-day legal conference devoted to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, as legal experts and speakers emphasized the ground-breaking nature of the court.

Lawyers and magistrates from Lebanon were joined by their colleagues from a host of Arab countries who focused on the importance of the Arab world's first such tribunal, after similar bodies were established for Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia and Sierra Leone.

Speakers at the conference hammered home the theme that the STL should not be seen as an infringement on national sovereignty, but the result of having a deficit of sovereignty and accountability in the past.

Ahmad Qushayri, a former judge with the International Court of Justice, said that "international criminal courts that have been established ... in a number of countries should not be seen as an exception phenomenon that works against national sovereignty."

"I don't think there is the slightest dispute over the need to see every person who commits a terrorist act and kills innocent people receive punishment," he said.

He voiced confidence that the STL would be able to do its job, based on the way it was formed, and the fact that it decided to release four high-ranking military and security officers who were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

Judge Mohammad Ayyat, from Morocco, said "staying away from the struggle of international criminal justice will not protect us from being among the victims [of terror]. We need to get on the train, with the intent of participating in influencing the course of justice, or else we will find ourselves one day as dead fish being taken along by the current."

Abdel-Hamid Ahdab, the head of an organization dedicated to spreading the notion of legal culture in the Arab world, said that respect for legislation and constitutions was of paramount importance. "How did the Arab world get into the difficulties that it finds itself in today? Isn't it because 'freedom' and 'the constitution' have become [synonymous with] being 'agents of imperialism'?" he asked, referring to the rhetoric of authoritarian regimes.

Michel Lian, the former head of the Beirut Bar Association, told the conference that a series of unsolved political crimes in Lebanon were responsible for the formation of the STL.

"The killers of Kamal Jumblatt, President Bashir Gemayel, Mufti Hassan Khaled, Sheikh Sobhi Saleh, Press Federation head Riad Taha, President Rene Mouawad, and Dany Chamoun were never revealed, along with the killers of the four judges in Sidon [in 1999], and up to the attempted assassination of Marwan Hamade [in 2004]," Lian said.

The conference invited opposing views to be aired, and tackled the thorny question of whether Lebanon would be able to block cooperation with the STL. – The Daily Star

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Monday, 7 February 2011

The Ins and Outs of the Hariri Tribunal

The first public hearing has been held at the Hariri tribunal in the Dutch town of Leidschendam near The Hague. The tribunal is dealing with the assassination in 2005 of Rafik Hariri, former prime minister of Lebanon, in which 23 people were killed. Here are five questions and answers about the tribunal.

Why is the tribunal important?

It is the first ever fully international terrorism tribunal. The reason the case is not being brought before the International Criminal Court in The Hague is because this court only deals with cases involving genocide and crimes against humanity, and not terrorism. The Hariri tribunal is jointly financed by the United Nations and the state of Lebanon.

Who is on trial?

The people or persons behind the assassination of Rafik Hariri will be tried. The perpetrators are almost certainly members of the extremist Lebanese Hezbollah movement. The formal charge is secret. As is the identity of those to be tried. A so-called 'pre-trial' judge will decide whether or not there is sufficient evidence to start the trial. Only then will the suspects be arrested and the charges made public. This information is being withheld because if it were made public it could hamper the investigation and arrest of the suspects. Proceedings in the Yugoslavia tribunal was made more difficult by this kind of information coming out before the trial.

Hezbollah has asked the new Lebanese government to withdraw its support for the tribunal. Is the trial still in with a chance of success?

Hezbollah regards the tribunal to be a political trial, set up by the United States and Israel to put the organisation in a bad light. Last month, the organisation withdrew from government, forcing new elections. As a result, Rafik Hariri's son, Saad al-Hariri, who was prime minister has been succeeded by Hezbollah-backed Najib Mikati. Hezbollah has asked the new prime minister to withdraw his support from the tribunal.

However, Geraldine Coughlan, Radio Netherlands Worldwide's reporter for International Justice, does not think it is likely that this will happen.

"The Lebanese government will not actually withdraw its support from the tribunal, because the government is cooperating with the UN Security Council. The tribunal was set up on the basis of an agreement between the Security Council and the Lebanese government in 2006. It already exists and will certainly continue. However, there are fears that naming possible Hezbollah members could lead to increased tension and fighting could break out in Lebanon."

What is the objective of the tribunal?

As a result of its turbulent political history, Lebanon has a long list of political assassinations, for which in almost every case no-one has been prosecuted. The Hariri tribunal has to break this pattern. The prosecution of the people behind the assassination is meant to act as a deterrent.

Why is the term terrorism only being defined now?

The international tribunal is a unique project. It will partly be based on Lebanese law and partly on international law. This is why all kinds of terms have to be redefined, says Ms Coughlan.

“Terms like conspiracy, terrorism and assassination have not been adequately defined in international law. So the terms have to be clearly defined first in consultation with the judges, the defence, and the prosecution. Only once this has been done, can the charges be formulated and made public.”

TamilNet

Saturday, 5 February 2011

Hague's WikiLeaks admission spells legal danger to Sri Lanka war-criminals

The Sierra Leone war crimes tribunal in The Hague has granted Charles G. Taylor, 62, the former Liberian president, who has been on trial charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the right to use two leaked American diplomatic cables as evidence to challenge the court's impartiality. While the leaked information in the Taylor case was used by Taylor's lawyer to raise doubts on the courts independence and suggested the prosecution was political, Sri Lanka's leaked cables from the US Embassy contain incriminating information on the complicity of Rajapakse family, Ex-SLA Commander Sarath Fonseka, and Tamil paramilitaries in war-crimes and crimes against humanity on Tamil civilians, legal sources in Washington said.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) was set up jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations. It is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996.

While the statute governing the SCSL provides concurrent jurisdiction to the SCSL and National Courts of Sierra Leone, the SCSL is given primacy and the SCSL can request the Sierra Leone Court to "defer to SCSL's competence in the Rules of procedure and Evidence."

The first cable - dated March 10th - quotes the US ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, as saying that "all legal options should be studied to ensure that Taylor cannot return to destabilise Liberia".

The second, dated April 15th, allegedly revealed that sensitive information about the trial was leaked to the US embassy in The Hague by "unnamed contacts" in the court and the office of the prosecutor.

Taylor insists his war crimes trial is based on "lies". He claimed in a written application that the US cables "raise grave doubts about the independence and impartiality" of his trial.

The Tribunal judges, however, denied Taylor's request to investigate and identify the sources within the court's chamber, prosecution and registry who provided the US government with the information in the cables, saying "the evidence does not demonstrate whether these 'contacts' have any relationship with the US government capable of interfering with the independence or impartiality of the Court or any organ of the Court."

Spokesperson for Tamils Against Genocide (TAG), a US-based activist group said, "this precedent setting decision by the United Nation's sponsored war-crimes tribunal will likely guide similar evidence admissibility determinations in ICC and ICJ proceedings. When geopolitical conditions converge and UN members haul Sri Lanka to the ICC, the alleged war-criminals then have to confront Ambassadors Butenis and Robert O'Blake's statements in a legal setting."



Ambassador Butenis

A January 2010 cable from US Embassy in Sri Lanka, made public by Wikileaks acknowledges that U.S. is cognizant of the fact that "responsibility for many alleged crimes rests with the country's senior civilian and military leadership, including President Rajapaksa and his brothers and opposition candidate General Fonseka."

Ambassador Butenis further reasons the lack of progress in internal investigations: "There are no

examples we know of a regime undertaking wholesale investigations of its own troops or senior officials for war crimes while that regime or government remained in power."



Robert O'Blake, Former Ambassador to Sri Lanka

Another WikiLeaks cable, dated 18th May 2007 from US embassy in Colombo, accuses Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapakse of giving orders to Sri Lanka Army (SLA) commanders in Jaffna not to interfere with Tamil paramilitaries who are "doing "work" that the military cannot do because of international scrutiny. The work referred to in the cable includes extra-judicial killings, extortion, abduction and prostitution by the Tamil paramilitary groups EPDP and Karuna Group. Both groups are led by Ministers in the present ruling Government in Sri Lanka.

"When Tamils continue with determination seeking justice and truth amid the cacophony of empty voices from the United Nations, and members of the international community, WikiLeaks has unexpectedly created unprecedented legal difficulty for the alleged war-criminals in Sri Lanka. WikiLeaks is an indispensable institution to the oppressed peoples," TAG spokesperson added.