

**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, 15 March 2011

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Exclusive
Tuesday, 15 March 2011

Charles Taylor awaits judgement

"Most definitely, Your Honour, I did not and could not have committed these acts against the sister Republic of Sierra Leone." It is April 3rd, 2006 and Charles Taylor appeared for the first time in the dock in Freetown. "[...] so most definitely I am not guilty." That same message was echoed in the courtroom last week.

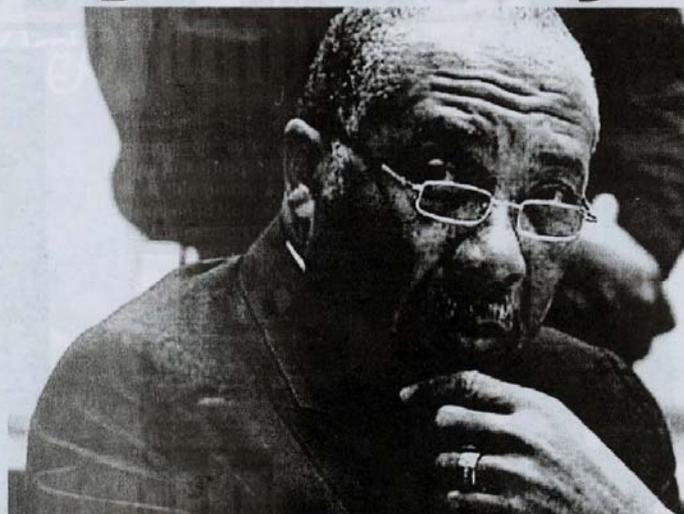
Friday was his last trial day. He pours some water into his glass. The former Liberian president listens to the last words of Chief Prosecutor Brenda Hollis. He scribbles notes on yellow post-its but appears a bit nervous. He folds a paper aircraft.

Taylor's defence team last week summed up their arguments that Taylor had nothing to do with a campaign of terror in Sierra Leone. On the contrary, they say, Taylor is not a war criminal and his "role in Sierra Leone was entirely peaceful."

"This Prosecution has been selective," said Courtenay Griffiths on Wednesday. He pointed to the empty seats behind him. "So why is Colonel Muammar Gaddafi not in the dock?" stressing that the tribunal was "set up to try those who bear the greatest responsibility."

Hollis, in February, took the court back to the forgotten brutalities of the Sierra Leonean civil war. She reminded the judges of the drugged child soldiers of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the chopped-off arms and legs and so-called 'blood diamonds.' Taylor was at "the very centre of the web of these crimes," Hollis repeated on Friday. "He was the one who had control over the leaders of these groups perpetuating such horrific crimes."

The golden thread in this case: Taylor forged a plan with RUF leader Foday Sankoh in Libya in the late eighties to conquer west Africa to enrich themselves with diamonds from Sierra Leone. Their means; a campaign of terror. Hollis stresses that she and her team have



proved "beyond any reasonable doubt" Taylor was personally responsible for the orgy of murder, threat and mutilation. "We ask you to enter convictions on all of the counts of the indictment," Hollis concluded.

Sankoh died before going on trial in Freetown and Griffiths feels that Taylor has become the scapegoat for the Sierra Leone war. And that while Gaddafi had trained him in Libya and sent him money and also that the presidents of Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau had no clean hands as well.

Griffiths gave his best on Wednesday. Now and then he wiped drops of sweat from his forehead. The crux of his argument: "This Prosecution is politically motivated." He went on saying, "whether you are princess or prostitute, whether you are the President of the United States or the President of Liberia, the law is above you. That is the essence of the rule of law. Whether that currently is the case

21st century form of neo-colonialism."

"A perverse logic," said Hollis, who on her turn claimed that the defence "has tried to transform the trial into a political and propaganda platform for Charles Taylor." And indeed, Taylor himself starred in the show for seven months as a witness in his very own trial. The prosecutor remains confident about her case. From January 2008, Hollis and her team flew 94 witnesses to the Netherlands to support their case, among them a number of severely mutilated victims, but also experts and direct evidence of Taylor's actions.

But Taylor's lawyers said the insider witness accounts were inconsistent and tainted. Terry Munyard on Thursday said "money has been used to pollute the pure waters of justice," and asked the court not to turn "a blind eye" to the effects on the evidence. It is up to the judges to decide on that evidence.

Closing the hearing, Presiding Judge Teresa Doherty said the judges will now deliberate in private. In the coming five to six months, Taylor will await judgement. "He will be reading no doubt," says Griffiths, adding he is looking after 'his welfare, does his own cooking and speaks a lot with the other African and Yugoslav detainees in Scheveningen."

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AllVoices

Monday, 14 March 2011

<http://www.allvoices.com>

Charles Taylor's Trial for Crimes Against Humanity Comes to an End

Charles Taylor Charles Taylor, former ruler of Liberia and implicated in the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone has been defending himself on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the international court in the Netherlands. The trial has come to an end, and the judges are contemplating how to deal with three years of evidence.

During Charles Taylor's trial some famous names have surfaced. Naomi Campbell was questioned about a bag of diamonds that he was said to have given her at a dinner hosted by Nelson Mandela. Mia Farrow Mia Farrow, also that that dinner, was questioned as well.

While those associations however tenuous, with Charles Taylor gained worldwide publicity, another one has been little observed. Tele-evangelist Pat Robertson Pat Robertson was given the rights to a gold mining concession held through his Grand Cayman businesses. He called it Freedom Gold. The deal was completed in 1999. The prosecution allege that Robertson was given the concession so that Robertson would put in a 'good word' for Taylor in the presidential office. February 2010 Taylor testified that he expected Robertson to lobby for him. Spokespeople for Robertson deny any such understanding.

The career of Charles Taylor has been a bloody one. It is believed that he received his military training from non other than Colonel Gaddafi. On his return from Libya he succeeded in overthrowing the government in Liberia and after about 10 years as dictator, was elected president. He is alleged to have backed the Sierra Leone Revolutionary United Front group in Sierra Leone who carried on a decade long war against the people and destabilized neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire.

The Revolutionary United Front rebels were outstanding in their level of violence towards civilians, hacking off arms and legs of the unlucky and forcing many to work as slaves in the rich diamond fields. The diamonds harvested became known as "blood diamonds" because of their association with the suffering of the people.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Monday, 14 March 2011

Case closed - Charles Taylor awaits judgement



Leidschendam, Netherlands

*By Thijs Bouwknecht,
Leidschendam*

"Throw it in the bin. That is what we submit the court should do with this

body of evidence: Get rid of it. We submit it's garbage." That was the message of Charles Taylor's lawyers during closing arguments speeches the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). And besides, they said, "why is Colonel Muammer Gaddafi not in the dock?"

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AFP

Monday, 14 March 2011

Ex-war crimes investigator to lead UN probe in Libya

A former UN war crimes investigator will lead a probe into suspected crimes against humanity in Libya, the president of the UN human rights council, Sihasak Phuanketkeow, said Friday.

Egyptian Cherif Bassiouni will be joined by Jordanian lawyer Asma Khader and Canadian Philippe Kirsch, who is a former judge and president of the International Criminal Court.

"I do hope that the mission of inquiry which has been set up will benefit from the cooperation of the country concerned," said Phuanketkeow.

The 47 member UN Human Rights Council unanimously decided last month to set up the investigation into suspected crimes against humanity after Moamer Kadhafi's regime dispatched Libya's army and air force to fire on civilians.

Phuanketkeow said he had not yet contacted the Libyan authorities to seek permission for the team to enter Libya.

"But now that the commission has been set up I will have to contact the authorities in Libya to ask for their cooperation to assist the task for the commission," he said.

The Thai ambassador estimated that "everything will be in place hopefully by two weeks."

Bassiouni chaired the UN Security Council's commission to investigate war crimes in the former Yugoslavia in 1992 - 1994, and was also an UN expert on the situation in Afghanistan.

Kirsch, who served as a judge at the ICC from 2003 to 2009, was recently named as the head of a tribunal to arbitrate a diplomatic dispute between Libya and Switzerland.

Khader, meanwhile, is a lawyer by training and a human rights advocate.

Asked if the mission could be used by Moamer Kadhafi's regime as a propaganda tool to demonstrate that all is well in Libya, Phuanketkeow said: "I don't think so."

"If you look at the people that I have appointed, they are people with solid reputation, very qualified, very objective... so I have no worry in that regard."

Source: AFP

AFP

March 14 2011

UN Security Council to meet on Kenya ICC case



By International
Justice Tribune

The UN Security Council will hold talks this week on Kenya's request to suspend an international crimes against humanity case against six top Kenyan officials.

Kenya made an official request for a hearing on the summons issued this week against senior allies of President Mwai Kibaki and his rival Raila Odinga, over the deaths of up to 1,500 people in unrest after a disputed presidential election in 2007.

Li Baodong, the Chinese ambassador to the UN and council president for March, said an "interactive dialogue" on the case would be held next Wednesday with Kenya and officials from the African Union taking part.

Kenya's Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka held meetings in New York this week with UN chief Ban Ki-moon and top Security Council envoys to demand the suspension of the International Criminal Court (ICC) case.

Kenya wants the six men to be handled by Kenyan courts, diplomats said.

The Security Council can issue a one-year suspension if there is a threat to international peace and security.

The council's western powers -- Britain, France and the United States -- say they do not believe a suspension is needed.

The ICC ordered the six men to appear before the court April 7 on charges they masterminded the post-election violence.

Kenya was plunged into violence after the December 2007 general elections in which then opposition chief Odinga accused Kibaki of having rigged his re-election.

Political riots turned into ethnic killings targeting Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe, who launched reprisal attacks in Kenya's worst violence since independence in 1963.

Odinga is now prime minister in a national unity government.

AFP

Monday, 14 March 2011

Kosovo rebels plead not guilty at war crimes trial



Hilversum, Netherlands

Two former KLA guerrilla leaders accused of war crimes for allegedly torturing civilians in prison camps set up in Albania pleaded

not guilty at the start of their trial before a Kosovo court on Monday.

The trial of Sabit Geci and Riza Alija, former commanders of the ethnic Albanian guerrilla Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), is the first to tackle the allegations that the rebels set up illegal camps in neighbouring Albania.

Geci and Alija, arrested last year, are also mentioned in the report by the Council of Europe's envoy Dick Marty linking Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci and other senior KLA commanders to organ trafficking and organised crime.

At the start of their trial both suspects pleaded not guilty before the mixed panel of international and local judges presided over by Briton Jonathan Welford-Carroll. The international judges are part of the EU's rule-of-law mission to Kosovo known as EULEX.

"I am not guilty. I reject this indictment entirely," Geci told the court.

Geci, 52, and Alija, 50, are facing seven charges of war crimes, including "inhumane treatment, torture and murder of civilians" in two camps in neighbouring Albania.

According to the prosecution, the camps were "logistics, training and supply" sites, but the accused used them to detain civilians in "filthy and unhealthy conditions".

The prisoners "were beaten regularly and were hit with batons and nightsticks (truncheons), kicked, mistreated and verbally abused," according to the indictment.

Local media reported that some 20 protected witnesses would testify at around 40 hearings planned to be held by the end of June.

Marty's report alleges that the KLA set up illegal prison camps in northern Albania where Serbs and Kosovo Albanians and Roma suspected of collaborating with them were held.

In some cases mostly Serb prisoners were moved from the camps and killed in order to sell their organs on the black market by a group close to Thaci, the report said.

The war between KLA guerrillas and security forces loyal to Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic ended after a June 1999 NATO air campaign ousted Belgrade troops from Kosovo.

The 3,000-member EULEX mission was launched in December 2008 to enforce the rule of law in Kosovo after Pristina declared independence, as well as to supervise its police, customs and judiciary.

EULEX has the power to step in and take on cases that the local judiciary and police are unable to handle because of their sensitive nature.

Hirondelle News Agency

Monday, 14 March 2011

Closing arguments in MRND trial scheduled for august

Closing arguments in the trial involving two top officials of the then Rwandan ruling party, MRND, Matthieu Ndirumpatse, who was the President and his Vice-President, Edouard Karemera, will be presented before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) starting August 22, 2011.

"The parties (prosecution and defence) will start presenting their closing arguments on August 22 and we will continue next days until we conclude with the presentation," Senior Trial Attorney Don Webster told the Hirondelle News Agency on Monday, adding, "both parties are required to file their final briefs by June 2."

Ndirumpatse and Karemera are charged with seven counts including genocide, complicity in genocide, incitement to commit genocide and crimes against humanity, allegedly committed, mostly by members of their party, its youth wing, Interahamwe, in particular.

The Interahamwe is a Hutu paramilitary organization formed by groups of young males who allegedly carried out the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsis in 1994. The prosecution has notably indicted the duo for their superior responsibility as top officials of the party.

To support the charges in question, the prosecution fielded 46 witnesses, of whom 30 appeared before the Chamber for direct examination, while the evidence of 16 others was admitted through their written statements. The defence called a total of 74 witnesses to challenge the allegations.

According to records, 35 witnesses testified in Karemera's defence case including himself, while 39 others with Ndirumpatse inclusive gave evidence to support his case.

Earlier, the prosecution had charged Ndirumpatse and Karemera jointly with former MRND Secretary General, Joseph Nzirorera. The Tribunal, however, terminated the proceedings against Nzirorera following his death on July 1, 2010. Before meeting his death, Nzirorera was still presenting his defence case.

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