

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Clock Tower at Eastern Police. Credit: Richard Sylvah

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:

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Local News

The Causes of the RUF Conflict / <i>The Punch</i>	Page 3
Bomaru Hosts ‘Wan Fambul’... / <i>The Punch</i>	Page 4

International News

Judges Give Guidelines for Bagosora Appeal Hearing / <i>Hirondelle News Agency</i>	Page 5
Special Tribunal for Lebanon Indictment Grows / <i>International Justice Tribune</i>	Page 6
ICC's Darfur Trial The Court's Mark in History? / <i>International Justice Tribune</i>	Page 7
Special Envoy 'Urged ICC to Take Up Case' / <i>The Nation</i>	Pages 8-9
Saudi Arabia Contributes \$10 million to Lebanon Tribunal / <i>YaLibnan</i>	Page 10

The Punch

Friday, 18 March 2011

Causes of the RUF Conflict

RUF Conflict

Basic Causes: Mass unemployment, Tribalism, Rebels-Libya, Poor economic conditions, and Corruption
Parties involved: Rebel leaders and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the government of the All Peoples Congress (APC)

The Sierra Leone civil war began in March 1991, when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) entered Sierra Leone from Liberia, launching a rebellion to overthrow the one-party rule of the All Peoples Congress (APC).

The RUF accused the APC, which had been in power since 1967, of rampant corruption, nepotism, and fiscal mismanagement. Despite the fact that Sierra Leone is extremely resource-rich, with large deposits of diamonds, gold, rutile, and bauxite, it is estimated to be one of the poorest countries in the world.

The RUF was originally made up of a mixture of middle class students with a populist platform, unemployed and alienated youths, and Liberian fighters from Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

The ideological component to the movement was never clearly actualized, and the rebellion quickly developed into a campaign of violence whose primary goal appeared to be simply to gain access to the country's diamond and mineral wealth.

From 1991 until the present, the RUF has fought with great brutality to overthrow the successive governments of both military and elected civilian regimes. Since the outbreak of the war, the country has been marked by instability and violence.

The tragic events of the 1990s were not isolated incidents; they were the culmination of a long history of human rights abuses and disrespect for democratic values by the All People's Congress which fostered violence that led to a civil war. The previous 20 years before the outbreak of war saw the rise of an increasingly authoritarian style of government, which undermined the authority of many of the nations institutional and encourage a system in which irregularities, injustices, and oppression of political opponents were tolerated and even encouraged by the government.

In 1992, APC President Joseph Momoh was overthrown in a military coup by Captain Valentine Strasser, whose National Provisional Ruling



Council (NPRC) ruled until it was itself overthrown in 1996, by his deputy, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.

Later in 1996 multi-party elections were held and won by Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, head of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), who pledged to bring about an end to the war.

After coming to the negotiating table in Abidjan, the RUF and SLPP signed a peace agreement in November 1996, the Abidjan Accord, which called for a cease-fire, disarmament, demobilization, and the withdrawal of all foreign forces.

The cease-fire, however, was broken in January 1997 when serious fighting broke out in southern Moyamba District.

May 1997, fourteen months after assuming power, President Kabbah was himself overthrown in a coup led by army major Johnny Paul Koroma, heading the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), following his escape from prison, where he had been held following an earlier attempted coup in September 1996.

Koroma cited the government's failure to implement the peace agreement as the reason for the coup. AFRC suspended the constitution, banned political parties, and announced rule by military decree after it took over - it also ushered in a period of political repression characterized by arbitrary arrests and detention further escalating the violence.

Bomaru host 'Wan Fambul' in War Relection

By Mustapha Ikamara

Following an initiative by several civil society groups to form a coalition called the National Unity Campaign 'Wi Na Wan Fambul', to commemorate the day the war started in Sierra Leone and campaign against violence, the people of Bomaru have been given the nod to host the first of several launchings in the quest for a peaceful and violent free Sierra Leone. Speaking at a Press conference in the Conference Room of Fambul Tok International, the Chairman of the coalition, who is also the Executive Director of Fambul Tok International, John Caulker said the decision to start in Bomaru was reached because it was there the first gunshot that signalled the beginning of a brutal 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone was fired.

The date for the launch of the campaign is the 23rd March though other activities would have begun before that

and according to Mr. Caulker, it is going to be a national campaign but with diverse dates in other areas at community, district or regional levels. "March 23rd of every year should be considered as a day of reflection for what happened during the war in Sierra Leone that started in 1991 and officially declared over on 18th January 2002. There is every need for us to reflect on the causes and see how we can harmonize the past and the present so that we can look into what the future will be," John Caulker advised.

However, it could be noted that two years back Fambul Tok (an NGO working in Sierra Leone to help reconcile people, families and communities that have been in conflict and consequently do not see eye-to-eye) organized a similar commemoration in collaboration with the people of Kailahun District.

Hirondelle News Agency

Thursday, 17 March 2011

Judges give guidelines for Bagosora appeal hearing

The Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has provided guidelines during hearing of appeal involving three former senior Rwandan military officers, including ex-Defence Ministry's Cabinet Director, Colonel Theoneste Bagosora, scheduled between March 30 and April 1, 2011.

"The Appeals Chamber hereby informs Theoneste Bagosora and the prosecution that during the course of appeal hearing, (...) are invited to discuss with reference to the record, Bagosora's ability to issues orders to the Rwandan Armed Forces between April 7 and 9, 1994," it explained in its order.

According to its order for the preparation of the appeal hearing, the Chamber wants the parties to discuss whether the only reasonable inference available from the evidence was that Bagosora knew or had reason to know that the specific crimes of which he was convicted were about to be committed.

Other appellants in the appeal are Major Aloys Ntabakuze, who commanded the Para-commando Battalion and Lieutenant-Colonel Anatole Nsengiyumva, former commander of the military sector of Gisenyi (northern Rwanda).

The Chamber wants Ntabakuze and the prosecution to address on the sufficiency notice provided to him by his indictment that he was being charged for crimes committed by militiamen and whether a defect in such respect, if any, was cured and his ability to prepare his defence was materially impaired.

Likewise, the Chamber wants Nsengiyumva and prosecution to discuss, among others, the sufficiency of notice provided to him by his indictment that he was charged for aiding and abetting the killings of Tutsis committed by militiamen in the Bisesero area of Kibuye prefecture in the second half of June 1994.

Bagosora, who was considered the mastermind of the Rwandan 1994 genocide, was held responsible for the killings for having exercised effective control over the army and gendarmerie between April 7 and 9, 1994 as the Defence Minister was on mission.

In his appeal, however, the appellant disputes such findings, alleging that during the period in question former Rwandan Defence Minister, General Marcel Gatsinzi, who was appointed Chief of Staff on April 7, 1994, and his arrival at the army headquarters the next day was responsible for all affairs of the force.

Gen. Gatsinzi, who has been summoned by the Trial Chamber, is expected to testify on March 30, on this point.

Bagosora was sentenced to life imprisonment alongside Ntabakuze and Nsengiyumva after the trio was convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes on December 18, 2008. Their co-accused, Brigadier-General Gratien Kabiligi was acquitted, for lack of evidence.

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International Justice Tribune

Saturday, 12 March 2011

Special Tribunal for Lebanon indictment grows

The prosecutor at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon filed an extended indictment on Friday. The indictment remains secret and the names of the suspects under investigation have not been released. Daniel Bellemare, said the amendment “expands the scope” of the initial indictment he filed in January. It could take months for judges to review thousands of supporting documents.

International Justice Tribune

Wednesday, 9 March 2011

ICC's Darfur trial – the court's mark in history?

The International Criminal Court's decision to put two Darfur rebel leaders on trial for the deaths of 12 African Union peacekeepers in 2007, may help make attitudes towards the court more positive in Sudan.

This will be the court's first trial for war crimes committed in the Darfur region. Abdallah Banda and Saleh Jerbo, who are not in custody, voluntarily surrendered to the court last June and urged other war crimes suspects to surrender to justice.

Two years ago, the Sudan International Defence Group (SIDG) – a non-governmental committee of Sudanese citizens, concerned about the negative effects that ICC arrest warrants could have for the peace process in Sudan, petitioned the court not to issue arrest warrants for rebel commanders. The SIDG says there are still negative perceptions about the ICC amongst the people in Sudan, but that is changing.

The Secretary General of the SIDG, Mohammed Alansari, said the referral of the Darfur situation to the ICC by the UN Security Council in 2005 and the prosecution investigations that followed, seemed “wrong to African culture”. Today, people are asking more questions about the ICC and generally start to believe that the court is “not a bad thing”, he added. The SIDG conducts investigations: advising officials, compiling reports from victims and rebels, submitting this information to the court.

The ICC is the first permanent international court that provides for victims to be legally represented in trials. Alansari says the SIDG has to overcome a lot of problems such as a lack of resources and funding to travel to far-distant areas to interview victims, particularly in southern Sudan, which he describes as a “very difficult situation”. Many victims, he says, feel they have been neglected by the UN and the US and appeal to NGOs for protection.

Alansari said the SIDG had carried out over 800 investigations over the past 3 years and helped set up mediation commissions which have yielded positive results. He said the SIDG's mission is to interview as many victims as possible, adding that he wants the international community to have a clear picture of how people feel about the role of the ICC in Sudan. The trial of Banda and Jerbo is expected to mark a new phase in the country, in forming public perceptions of the court. It will take on added significance, if other new indictments are issued.

Both men described themselves as revolutionaries when they appeared in court last year, saying they would clear their names in the case. They both deny charges of violence to life, intentionally directing attacks against peacekeepers and pillaging.

A date for the trial of Banda and Jerbo will be set later. Three other people are wanted for war crimes in Darfur: Sudanese government minister Ahmad Harun, Janjaweed militia leader Ali Kushayb, and Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir, who prosecutors accuse of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur.

The UN says at least 300,000 people have been killed in Darfur and 1.8 million people forced to flee their homes since non-Arab rebels first rose up against the Arab-dominated Khartoum regime in 2003.

The Nation (Nairobi)

Thursday, 17 March 2011

Kenya: Special Envoy 'Urged ICC to Take Up Case'

Walter Menya

Nairobi — The UN special rapporteur for extrajudicial killings nudged the International Criminal Court to take up the post-election violence case after the government refused to cooperate with him or establish a special tribunal, according to leaked US diplomatic cables.

Prof Philip Alston had also asked donor countries, and particularly the US, to pressure the Kenyan government to undertake reforms to end impunity.

Two years after Prof Alston presented his report, cases of extra-judicial killings still persist. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Raila Odinga directed the police to carry out thorough investigations into the recent spate of forced disappearances and extra-judicial killings.

The US has been at the forefront in calling for reforms. Washington has also stated that it will not support Kenya's request to defer post-election violence cases at The Hague.

According to the cable, Prof Alston told ambassador Michael Ranneberger that the government had proven difficult to deal with. He also doubted the capacity of his employer, the UN Human Rights Council, to implement the report.

"Alston told us that the government had stonewalled his attempts to get information. He called the Kenyan government 'by far the most uncooperative government' he had encountered in his nine country visits as special rapporteur," the cable reads.

"He stated that despite multiple, specific requests for information from police and judicial authorities, the government provided almost no information to demonstrate it had made any efforts to investigate, or hold accountable those deemed responsible for, extrajudicial killings."

The government's uncooperative stance, the cable quotes the rapporteur, made it very difficult to produce a balanced report.

At the time, Prof Alston said he had received testimony from "numerous, credible witnesses" and also reports from non-governmental organisations regarding extrajudicial killings by the police during the post-poll violence.

He also had information on Mungiki killings, as well as others by the police and military in Mt Elgon.

With the government unwilling to establish a local mechanism to try those suspected of being behind the post-election chaos, the rapporteur told the ambassador of his plan to seek the intervention of ICC chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo.

"Alston confided to the ambassador that he hoped he could prod the ICC chief prosecutor into action and that, if the ICC began investigating, it might also focus Kenyan politicians on establishing a special tribunal."

The Americans were among the 12 Western countries that voiced public support for the implementation of the report.

The Alston report caused significant divisions within the coalition government, with a section calling for its full implementation and another asking that it be disregarded.

The PNU and ODM sides of the coalition sent a delegation each when Prof Alston presented his report to the UNHRC in June 2009.

YaLibnan

Thursday, 17 March 2011

Saudi Arabia contributes \$10 million to Lebanon Tribunal



Well informed sources reportedly told Al Sharq newspaper that Saudi Arabia contributed \$10 million to the budget of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon .

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) was established by the UN security council in 2007 to try the killers of former PM Rafik Hariri, who was assassinated in a 2005 truck bombing in Beirut.

Members of the Hezbollah movement, with its allies pulled out of the unity government last January Wednesday over STL's imminent indictments

Hezbollah has said it would not accept the indictment of its members.

In November, Nasrallah that the group will "cut off the hand" of anyone who tries to arrest any of its members for the al-Hariri killing, raising fears of renewed violence in Lebanon.