

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



Special Court and Prison Watch Sierra Leone staff pose with pardoned prisoners during an Outreach at Pademba Road Prison on Independence Day.

## **PRESS CLIPPINGS**

**Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office**

**as at:**

Thursday, 28 April 2011

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

### Local News

Sierra Leone Can Overtake Rwanda' - Deputy Information Minister / *Government Press Release* Page 3

### International News

Ivory Coast: Truth or Justice? / *International Justice Tribune* Pages 4-5

US Trial Begins for Man Accused in Rwandan Genocide / *Voice of America* Page 6

First ICC Trial to Conclude / *International Justice Tribune* Page 7

The Woes Facing Kenya's Truth Commission / *International Justice Desk* Pages 8-9

## PRESS RELEASE

Friday, 22 April 2011

### **‘Sierra Leone can overtake Rwanda’ - Deputy Information Minister**

The Deputy Minister of Information and Communications, Hon. Sheka Tarawalie, has said the socio-economic developments that he has seen in Rwanda are phenomenal and worth commending, especially against the background of that country having gone through perhaps the most atrocious war in contemporary times.

“It’s great. It’s amazing. The roads, the electricity, the water supply, the co-habitation, the peace. It simply tells the story of a resilient people, a people ready to put the past behind them and strive forward. For this, there’s need to commend the strong and disciplined leadership of President Paul Kagame,” the Deputy Minister and Co-Government Spokesman who’s visiting his wife’s home-country for the first time said. “Here’s a country which went through terrible circumstances much more than we did in Sierra Leone; but you can’t imagine how rapid they have recovered, how fast they have catapulted themselves into an enviable nation. You see progress everywhere. The people are merely saying through their action that love can conquer evil. A mere agrarian society has turned itself into the cleanest and arguably the fastest-growing country in Africa.”

Notwithstanding, the Deputy Minister is positive that Sierra Leone now has what it takes to match Rwanda’s record and even overtake it: “The age-old problem of Sierra Leone was that of leadership. But by all indications, we now have a committed and development-oriented leadership in President Ernest Bai Koroma. You can see that his style of leadership bears the marks of President Kagame’s, and it’s no wonder that the former Prime Minister of Britain Tony Blair has openly said the two Presidents are the best in Africa. However, I am very optimistic that Sierra Leone will overtake Rwanda under President Koroma’s leadership.”

In explaining his optimism, the Deputy Minister said, “We have what Rwanda does not have. We are not a landlocked country. There’s so much we can accrue through the sea – through our port, through our marine resources. And we have the gold, the diamond, the iron ore, the bauxite, and you name them. With President Koroma’s leadership style as encapsulated in the Agenda for Change, I see no reason why we would soon not be able to overtake Rwanda.”

Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister ensured he spoke to the Special-Court-imprisoned Sierra Leoneans in Rwanda via telephone, but could not see them in person. He told them that he was speaking to them as Sierra Leoneans, and that even as Sierra Leone is celebrating its Golden Jubilee, their “incarceration is a reminder that never again should Sierra Leone go to war against itself. You cannot celebrate with us because apparently you contributed to the evil that befell us; and you are paying for that. But you need not totally lose hope. Today is Good Friday. Remember that there’s an Easter too. Your families back home will celebrate with us,” he told the former leaders of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), and the Kamajor/Civil Defence Force (CDF) who are serving varied lengthy sentences.

He told them that since they are provided with facilities like access to satellite television, they would be able to monitor events back home now with the upgrading of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation television to a satellite status “to see the quiet revolution that is going on under the leadership of President Koroma.”

**Abdul Karim Koroma**  
**Information Attaché**  
**Sierra Leone Embassy**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**  
**22 April 2011**

# International Justice Tribune

Wednesday, 27 April 2011

## Ivory Coast: truth or Justice?

*By Thijs Bouwknecht, Amsterdam*

How salubrious and healing are Truth and Reconciliation Commissions? This question rears its head again in Ivory Coast. The country's new president hopes such a commission would restore the calm needed for a future of peace. At the same time, it could offer Ouattara the possibility of not having to appear in court.

One of the first statements made by Allasane Ouattara as president, after he had finally crushed his rival, was: 'a truth and reconciliation commission is going to heal the wounds of the civil war'. Ouattara is facing the emblematic problem of political transition: he has to rebuild the country and settle the past.

Ivory Coast's much divided population must find a way to live side by side, while the two former presidential rivals must bear responsibility for possible crimes against humanity their troops might have committed. Is it a matter for a TRC, or for judges in a court of law?

Ouattara looks at South Africa, which serves as the classic example of dealing with a brutal past without the interference of judges. Desmond Tutu's truth commission in the 1990s uncovered the atrocities of Apartheid. Victims were heard in public, while perpetrators were offered amnesty in exchange for confessions. The commission's purpose was to document past atrocities, reconcile the black and white populations, and reach justice. In South Africa, healing was more important than retribution in court.

### Global trend

They became a global trend: official probes into large scale human rights violations, repression or disappearances. Often these commissions dealt with recognising the victims' suffering, documenting crimes and reconciling former rivals.

Historically, TRCs have been popular in dealing with military juntas in Latin America. Reconciliation initiatives after the war in the former Yugoslavia, however, failed. The US city of Greensboro looked into racial unrest in 1979, while in Canada a commission is currently probing the treatment of its indigenous people.

TRCs were also set up in Asia. Earlier this year, the South Korean commission published an extensive report on human rights violations dating back to the 1950s. Last year, Thailand created a commission which examined the country's bloody political unrest earlier that year.

### Africa

Africa has the highest number of TRCs. Often these proved to be a façade for impunity. The world's first truth commission was set up by Uganda's mass murderer Idi Amin. Conclusions from a number of other TRCs remain obscure to this day. Who would still remember Robert Mugabe's murderous campaigns in Matabeleland in the 1980s? A commission of inquiry examined the matter, but its report remained confidential.

In Liberia, Ivory Coast's neighbour, the TRC was seen as the only solution for answering the question of justice after a decade of civil war. However, notorious warlords consequently escaped prosecution.

Other TRCs were doomed to fail. Burundi was too divided to discuss its genocidal episodes, while in Eastern Congo the examiners had blood on their hands. In Kenya, where hearings started last week, political wrangling overshadows the content of the subject matter. Chad reached a small victory: documented atrocities formed the basis of a court case against former President Hisséne Habré.

## **West-Africa**

Ouattara does not mention TRCs in the region. Yet West Africa has shown that it has the capacity for self reflection, albeit not as effective as that of Tutu's South African commission. Neighbouring Guinea announced an investigation in January into the mass killings and rapes at Conakry's largest stadium two years ago.

The TRC in Sierra Leone published a substantial report on child soldiers and blood diamonds, but reconciliation was hardly present. Potential perpetrators stayed away from the hearings, afraid of prosecution by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown. The report, 'Witness to Truth', is gathering dust as the cash-strapped government of Sierra Leone is unable to follow up on the report's recommendations.

Ouattara could reach out towards the east. In Ghana, efforts towards a TRC led to limited reparations to victims by a succession of corrupt regimes.

## **ICC**

While Ouattara considers his options, the ICC prosecutor is looking over his shoulders. Luis Moreno Ocampo will point out to the new president that recent ethnic killings could not just be dealt with by truth commissions. Judges, preferably in Ivory Coast but otherwise in The Hague, must look into these crimes against humanity, the prosecutor said.

Truth commissions are good sources of material for prosecutors, but impunity is a taboo for Ocampo. His credo is that "one does not cancel out the other." Both Laurent Gbagbo and Ouattara are well aware of The Hague. Both men – Gbagbo already in 2003 and Ouattara a few weeks ago – have sent a letter to the ICC giving Ocampo the mandate to carry out an investigation.

And now we have to wait to see whether Ouattara could realise his concoction of truth, reconciliation and justice. Ivorians and the international community will closely watch his promises.

Voice of America

Tuesday, 26 April 2011

### **US Trial Begins for Man Accused in Rwandan Genocide**

A man accused of taking part in the 1994 Rwandan genocide is on trial in an immigration court in the United States.

Eighty-four-year-old Lazare Kobagaya is accused of playing a role in the atrocities, and then lying about it to obtain U.S. citizenship in 2006. Prosecutors say the trial is the first of its kind in the U.S. requiring proof of genocide.

Jury selection is taking place Tuesday in the central U.S. city of Wichita, Kansas.

Prosecutors say that during the immigration process, Kobagaya lied and said he lived in Burundi during the Rwandan genocide. The government says Kobagaya was actually directing attackers to kill hundreds of ethnic Tutsis.

About 50 foreign witnesses have been brought to Wichita to testify.

If convicted, Kobagaya's citizenship could be revoked and he could face deportation.

In 1994, Hutu extremists in Rwanda killed an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in a span of 100 days. Many of the top organizers have been tried and convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

## International Justice Tribune

Wednesday, 27 April 2011

### **First ICC trial to conclude**

The first trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) is about to conclude. The last defence witness in the Lubanga trial ended his testimony on April 18th, for the most part in private session.

Thomas Lubanga Dyilo is on trial for conscripting and using child soldiers in his militia in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2002-2003.

The trial, which began on January 26, 2009, has been plagued by delays and nearly ended before it began when prosecutors refused to turn over potentially exculpatory evidence to the defense.

After the trial got back on track, defense lawyers accused prosecutors of abuse of process by allegedly presenting false witnesses who claimed they were coached by prosecution intermediaries.

A final decision on the abuse of process charge will be included in the final judgment. The Trial Chamber scheduled oral arguments for August 25 and 26, 2011.

## International Justice Desk

Sunday, 4 April 2011

### **The woes facing Kenya's truth commission**

By Claire Wachira, Nairobi

The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) has begun its first public hearings in Northern and upper Eastern Kenya, where it has so far collected 3,474 statements.

Acting Chairperson Tecla Namachanja said the hearings would be rolled out nonstop across the country, until September, winding up in the Western and Mt Elgon regions.

She explained that the Commission would first conduct individual hearings, hearing the stories of victims and perpetrators; these would be followed by institutional hearings – to see how the country’s institutions played a role; and finally the Commission will study events by theme.

“After the hearings in the Northern and upper Eastern regions we will move to Nairobi and Nyanza, Central and Rift Valley, lower Eastern and Coast, and then conclude in Western and Mt Elgon,” she said.

The Commission has so far collected 20,000 statements across the country. Thirty percent of these came from women who told stories of sexual violation and economic marginalisation.

In other Public hearings at Wajir (Northern Kenya), the TJRC heard witnesses describe the events of the alleged February 1984 Wagalla massacre.

One of the witnesses, Bishar Ibrahim Ishmael, who was a government official at the time, said he identified the government and security officials who were at the airstrip where the killings are alleged to have taken place between 8th and 16th February 1984.

Bishar said that by 8th February 1984, about 2000 people had been rounded up at the airstrip and by the 16th, he estimated 5,000 people had been brought as far as Mandera. Bishar later recalls seeing two truckloads of dead people, being driven out of the airstrip.

Another witness Osman Nur Abdille, a humanitarian aid worker gave evidence in the form of photographs he took during the massacre.

“We posed as Red Cross humanitarian workers as we helped and took photos” said Abdille.

The TJRC is expected to wind up its mandate in the last quarter of the year but, so far, it is still conducting public hearings into human rights abuses witnessed in the country between 1963 and early 2008, after which it will compile a final report and make recommendations.

### **Probe against Kenya Truth Commission chair to continue**

The woes facing the Kenya TJRC chair Bethwel Kiplagat are far from over.

The tribunal investigating his conduct has decided to proceed further.

Kiplagat is accused of conduct that “erodes and compromises” his credibility. It is alleged that his past is riddled with unethical practices and a lack of integrity.

Mr Kiplagat had filed an application seeking to block the tribunal from investigating him on the grounds that it lacked powers to probe his past.

Kiplagat stepped down to allow the probe after months of opposition by civil society.

The 3-member tribunal is expected to also investigate whether Mr Kiplagat has been linked to incidents considered as an abuse of human rights. Also, whether he is likely to be a witness in the same matters that the TJRC has been established to investigate.

The Gazette notice establishing the tribunal and signed by Chief Justice Evans Gicheru gave it six months from October 21st last year to accomplish its mandate and hand in its report. So far, the tribunal is yet to receive any witnesses to testify against Kiplagat's suitability for the job.

Civil society alleged that owing to his past employment under for President Moi, where he was a Permanent Secretary and High Commissioner. Kiplagat was expected to testify over the 1984 massacre of civilians at Wagalla and the assassination of former Foreign Affairs minister Robert Ouko.

Kiplagat was the foreign affairs Permanent Secretary when his former boss Robert Ouko disappeared and was later found dead.