

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



Boy in an empty classroom.

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:

Monday, 4 July 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, 1 July 2011

Initial Appearance for Five Accused of Contempt Will Take Place July 15

Five persons accused of contempt have been ordered to appear before the Special Court in Freetown on July 15 to plead to charges they attempted to interfere with Prosecution witnesses.

Hassan Papa Bangura, aka “Bomblast” and Samuel Kargbo, aka “Sammy Ragga”, are ordered to appear before Justice Teresa Doherty at 9:00 a.m., while convicted former Armed Forces Revolutionary Front (AFRC) leaders Ibrahim Bazy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu, aka “Five-Five”, are ordered to participate in the proceedings by video link from Rwanda. All four are charged with two counts of attempting to bribe a witness to recant testimony given in the AFRC trial. Kamara faces an additional count of disclosing the name of a protected witness “in knowing violation of an order of a Chamber”.

Eric Senessie is ordered to appear in court at 12:00 p.m. to plead to a nine count order in lieu of an indictment. He is charged with nine counts of attempting to induce Prosecution witnesses in the Taylor trial to recant testimony given before the Court in The Hague.

The Special Court’s Defence Office has assisted the Accused in securing legal representation.

If convicted of contempt under Rule 77 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the Accused could face a prison sentence of up to seven years, a fine of up to two million leones (approximately \$500), or both.

#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.

INFORMATION FOR MEDIA - NOT FOR ADVERTISING

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5 to appear before Special Court in Freetown, July 15



Justice
Teresa
Doherty,
presiding

**Written by Solomon Moriba
1 July 2011**

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The Southern Times

Friday, 1 July 2011

The Charles Taylor prophecy comes true!

By Walter Chari and Mabasa Sasa



'And here I am, a former Afri

'And here I am, a former African Head of State who has been transplanted from our continent to an isolated jail cell in the Netherlands, awaiting trial at the hands of a court behind which the powerful nations are to be found... Today it is me and God only knows who it will be tomorrow.'

These words were written by the former Liberian President Charles Taylor in one of his many letters since 2007 to the leaders of the African Union, ECOWAS and other continental statesmen soon after Nigeria so infamously handed him over to the West after having promised to help him.

Taylor had been hounded for Liberia, and – much like with Muammar Gaddafi in Libya right now – there was no real pity for a man many people viewed as a warlord in expensive clothing.

But just as with Gaddafi now, there was, and still is, a lot of rancour about the manner in which the West took it upon themselves to intervene in Africa's affairs so that they could impose a regime that was better suited to them than to the people of the continent and more importantly, the people of Liberia.

Taylor pleaded for the 'formation of a commission to look into the political and legal underpinnings of how I ended up in Europe to face trial and their implications for other African Heads of States and Government'.

The very manner in which Taylor came to be in the hands of the ICC says a lot about the disdain with which Africa is held by West.

It was in 2006.

Taylor was in Ghana and was engaged in peace talks sponsored by the African Union and the UN to end Liberia's civil strife.

Present at those talks were the host, John Kufuor, South Africa's Thabo Mbeki, Mozambique's Joaquim Chissano, Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo and Sierra Leone's Tejan Kabbah.

An indictment was sent via email – they did not even have the courtesy of sending an emissary – to the Ghanaian government, while a Press conference was being held far away in Sierra Leone to announce to the world that Taylor would face a slew of charges revolving around alleged crimes against humanity (he is now facing 11 charges related to the war in Sierra Leone).

Kuffour, seeing that things were getting out of hand, put Taylor on his own presidential jet and flew him to Monrovia.

The New African magazine (March 2004) subsequently quoted Kufuor saying he 'felt betrayed by the international community' by the manner in which the Taylor issue was being handled.

'Five African presidents were meeting in Accra to find ways of kick-starting the Liberian peace process, and Mr Taylor had been invited as President of Liberia.

'We were not even aware that a warrant had been issued for his arrest. Incidentally, the African leadership had taken the initiative to convince Mr Taylor to resign and allow all the factions in Liberia to negotiate. 'It was when the presidents were leaving my office for the Conference Centre where Mr Taylor was expected to make a statement that word came in that a warrant had been issued for his arrest. 'I really felt betrayed by the international community (and) I informed the United States of the embarrassment that the announcement caused.'

Observers said Africa's anger at the time stemmed from the fact that it seemed the warrant for Taylor's arrest was deliberately issued to scupper the Liberian peace talks and showed no respect for their efforts (echoes of what is happening in Libya?).

New African wrote: 'The then chief prosecutor of the Court, the American lawyer David Crane, perhaps thinking about the interests of his home government more than the interests of West Africans, may have calculated that a successful conclusion of the Accra talks would lead to elections in Liberia fixed for July 2003 which were likely to be won by Taylor and his NPP party.

'That was bad news for the external agenda, and the earlier the talks were nipped in the bud, the better. The plan worked! Though the talks continued in Accra, Taylor agreed to step down as president if he were seen as the impediment to peace. And on 11 August 2003, he duly relinquished power and went into exile in Nigeria, after an immunity-from-prosecution deal had been arranged and secured by the African Union, ECOWAS, the UN, and the US and UK governments...

'The understanding was that Taylor would continue to be protected by the Nigerian government, and would not be handed over to the Special Court (for Sierra Leone).

'To give him double assurance, Presidents Kufuor, Mbeki, Chissano and Obasanjo accompanied him to the Nigerian capital, Abuja, on the first leg of the journey into exile...

'But contrary to the deal, the Special Court and Western human rights groups - with an agenda to push - got some 300 African NGOs to back a public relations campaign to force Nigeria to hand over Taylor.

'Lawsuits were hastily arranged in Nigeria, and Obasanjo, facing unpopularity at home for his plan to seek a third term, began to bow to the pressure by making one fateful promise: he would only hand over Taylor to an elected Liberian president who makes the request.

'In the event, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who had initially stated, correctly, that the Taylor issue was not a priority, came under intense pressure from Washington and the human rights community as her recent visit to the US loomed.'

Today Taylor is at The Hague, but before his trial began he issued that stark warning: 'Today it is me and God only knows who it will be tomorrow.'

It now seems chillingly prophetic.

In June 2008 the International Criminal Court issued a warrant of arrest to Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir over the Darfur crisis, becoming the first sitting Head of State in the world to be so indicted by the

ICC.

Other notable African figures to be also arrested or indicted by the ICC was the former Vice President of the interim government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Jean-Pierre Bemba, who was arrested and extradited to The Hague in May 2008.

The ICC's rather overzealous chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo, who certainly appears to have no real sense of justice seeing as he rushes to indict Gaddafi but has never uttered a word about George W Bush and Tony Blair over Iraq and Afghanistan, stands before a compliant Western media waving these indictments at the drop of a hat.

It is also rather strange that the United States, itself not a signatory of the Rome Statute that created the ICC, is always at the centre of pushing for African and Eastern European leaders to be taken to The Hague.

The Israeli government kills with impunity on a daily basis unarmed civilians in Palestine and the ICC is mum about it.

Right now France's Nicolas Sarkozy – fresh from taking the United Nations to the level of aggressors in Cote d'Ivoire – is all over the show in Libya and ordering airstrikes on Tripoli in a bid to assassinate Gaddafi.

Britain right now refuses to repatriate the islanders of Chagos to their homes after they were forcibly and brutally removed between 1968 and 1971 to make way for the American military base on Diego Garcia.

All these are holocausts that are in the public glare but Moreno-Ocampo is somehow blind to all of this.

What has to be granted is that the world really does need an international court, but is the ICC as it is what we need?

Was the ICC created to hound African leaders and those of smaller nations alone?

Is the ICC a calculated assault on Africans to prove to the world that the continent is barbaric and needs someone as excitable as Moreno-Ocampo to bring order and development?

The world has seen rape, torture, gross human rights abuses and looting of oil and historical artifacts in Iraq and Afghanistan, but no one associated with these wars has come within even a sniff of The Hague.

Guantanamo Bay, itself located on occupied Cuban territory in defiance of international law, continues to exist and no one knows what manner of abuses are going on in there, even as Barack Obama has the nerve to tell the world about 'change'.

The US continues to torture prisoners of its 'war on terror' in other territories so that it does not have to torture them on American soil but not a murmur is heard from Moreno-Ocampo.

The swiftness with which the ICC prosecutor has managed to 'investigate' and collect 'evidence' in Libya against Gaddafi is astonishing to say the least.

It took nearly a decade for the ICC to collect evidence and testimony on the 'war crimes' in the former Yugoslavia.

Even after the investigations, the tribunal prosecuted only three Bosnian Serb commanders and the former President Slobodan Milosevic died while in detention.

At present, there are 22 cases currently before the ICC, all of them pertaining to crimes allegedly

committed in five African states: Kenya, Sudan (Darfur), Uganda (the Lord's Resistance Army), the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic.

Moreno-Ocampo is yet to secure any convictions, but not for lack of trying.

Apart from his Libya charade, he is conducting 'preliminary examinations' in Guinea, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire among others.

Obama administration officials have expressed support for ICC prosecutions in both Sudan and Kenya (never mind that they will not be party to the Rome Statute).

That is the kind of world that we live in.

In the face of all this, it is no great wonder that the civilized world has ignored Moreno-Ocampo's bleating about arresting al-Bashir and consigning him to The Hague.

African Union commission chair Jean Ping earlier this year said: 'We Africans and the African Union are not against the International Criminal Court. That should be clear.

'We are against (Moreno) Ocampo who is rendering justice with double-standards... Why not Argentina, why not Myanmar ... why not Iraq?'

It should also be borne in mind that no one has ever left ICC either free or alive. It is essentially a hanging court!

Africa should dissociate itself from the ICC until Moreno-Ocampo develops a conscience of sorts, or better still is relieved of his duties.

CNN

Monday, 4 July 2011

Bosnian Serb genocide suspect Mladic refuses to enter plea

By the CNN Wire Staff

The Hague, Netherlands (CNN) -- Bosnian Serb genocide suspect Ratko Mladic Monday refused to enter a plea at his war crimes trial, demanding new lawyers and speaking over the judge until he was removed from the court.

Mladic, who was captured earlier this year after more than 15 years in hiding, was a combative defendant, repeatedly interrupting the U.N. war crimes tribunal's judge.

"You're not allowing me to breathe," the former general said Monday before Judge Alphons Orié ordered him removed from the court and adjourned briefly.

Orié then entered not guilty pleas to all counts against Mladic and adjourned the hearing indefinitely. Monday's appearance was Mladic's second at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

At his first appearance on June 3, Mladic dismissed as "obnoxious" charges against him.

"I would like to receive what you've read out just now, these obnoxious charges leveled against me," Mladic said, after the judge recited the charges against him. "I want to read this properly, to give it some proper thought together with my lawyers, because I need more than a month for these monstrous words, the ones that I've never heard before."

Mladic was the commander of Bosnian Serb forces during the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the bloodiest of the conflicts that accompanied Yugoslavia's breakup in the 1990s.

The 69-year-old is accused of leading a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" against Bosnia's Muslim and Croat populations that included the shelling of Sarajevo and the torture, abuse and rape of civilians. More than 200,000 Muslims and Croats died in the 1992-95 conflict, including nearly 8,000 Muslim men and boys slaughtered at Srebrenica in 1995. It was Europe's worst massacre since World War II.

His first court appearance at The Hague occurred days after he was arrested after more than 15 years in hiding.

During the appearance, he asked for more time to enter a plea, saying he needs more than the 30 days required so he can understand the charges. He was "gravely ill," he said, and had not yet read the documents relating to the charges.

Mladic was asked whether there was any issue relating to his arrest or detention, or any other issue that he wanted to raise.

Mladic -- who repeatedly said he stood up for his country -- said he didn't kill Croats.

"I do not fear any journalist or any people, any nation or ethnicity. I defended my country and people ... now I am defending myself," Mladic said.

"If you want the proceedings to proceed as they should ... I just have to say that I want to live to see that I am a free man. And such as I am, I am defending my country and my people and not Ratko Mladic."

Mladic was taken to The Hague after losing his fight against extradition from Serbia. He was charged with genocide, crimes against humanity and violations of the laws of war. An amended indictment against him was then filed to make sure charges "reflect the most recent developments in the tribunal's case law."

The suspect gave himself up without a fight May 26. Officials located Mladic in a village north of the Serbian capital after culling information from his former comrades and close family members. It is unclear what source led investigators to the former military commander.

The arrest clears a major hurdle that once stood between Serbia and its long-awaited entrance into the European Union, but the move could also usher in a political backlash from the country's electorate, some of whom consider Mladic a hero.

Other key fugitive war criminal suspects previously captured are Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, who died in jail in 2006 during his trial at The Hague.

CNN's Antonia Mortensen, Dan Rivers, Nic Robertson and Ivan Watson contributed to this report.

The Guardian
Monday, 4 July 2011

Ratko Mladic removed from war crimes court after being disruptive

Former Bosnian Serb army chief refused to enter plea and interrupted judge as charges against him were read out



Ratko Mladic at the international criminal court, from where he was removed for being disruptive as charges against him were read out. Photograph: Pool/Reuters

Former Bosnian Serb army chief Ratko Mladic was removed from the UN war crimes court at The Hague on Monday after refusing to enter a plea and disrupting the

judge's attempts to read out the charges against him.

Presiding judge Alphons Orie warned Mladic several times on Monday not to interrupt him as the defendant argued he should be allowed to choose his own lawyers.

"No, no, I'm not going to listen to this without my lawyer," Mladic shouted as he removed his translation headphones when the judge began reading out the charges.

Shortly before guards escorted Mladic from court, he shouted at Orie: "You want to impose my defence. What kind of a court are you?"

After a brief break, Orie resumed the hearing and began reading out the charges against Mladic.

The tribunal judges entered not guilty pleas to 11 charges on Mladic's behalf, which include genocide and relate to the 43-month siege of the Bosnian capital Sarajevo and the massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica.

Kenyans Support Prosecution of ‘Masterminds’ of Post-Election Violence, Says Rights Official

Peter Clottey



Photo: Reuters

Three Kenyan suspects (back row, from L to R), William Ruto (L), Henry Kosgey (C) and Joshua Arap Sang (R), accused of crimes against humanity in their country's post-election violence in 2007-08, make their initial appearance at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, April 7, 2011

Hassan Omar of Kenya's National Commission on Human Rights says there is overwhelming support for the trial by the International Criminal Court of the alleged perpetrators of post-election violence four years ago.

In March, the ICC issued summonses to six senior politicians and government officials implicated in the fighting.

Violence between supporters of the two opposing presidential candidates left more than 1,300 people dead and hundreds of thousands displaced.

At its Friday summit in Equatorial Guinea, the African Union renewed its call for the UN Security Council to defer the investigation for 12 months until Kenya can reform its judicial system to handle the case.

The AU's call follows other unsuccessful efforts by Kenya to have the council suspend the probe. The UN body has the power to delay the trials for one year, though it cannot stop the ICC proceedings.

Omar said the African Union erred in its call, and said Kenyans are "tired" of attempts by senior officials of the unity government to thwart the trial.

"It's a very desperate attempt by insiders of the [Mwai] Kibaki government to look for every avenue to defer The Hague trial and then to refer them back into Kenya, so that they can then manipulate the case internally," said Omar.

"One realizes that Africa like other parts of the world is probably the safe-haven of impunity," said Omar. "The Kenyan people do really want these trials to go on."

[They] are committed in their majority to ensure the perpetrators of post-election violence are held to account.”

Some analysts say the ICC’s continued probe could create tensions and a potentially violent environment during next year’s elections.

But, Omar said the trial in The Hague will proceed, despite the AU’s opposition.

“Kenyans have matured in the political sense,” said Omar, “[and] they will not agree to slit each other’s throats merely on account of six Kenyans going to [trial] in The Hague.”

The suspects include Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta, Industrialization Minister Henry Kosgey and suspended Education Minister William Ruto.

The others are secretary to the cabinet, Francis Kirimi Muthaura, former police Chief Mohammed Hussein Ali and radio executive Joshua Arap Sang.

The ICC is considered to be a court of last resort which acts only when nation states are unwilling or unable to try those accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The Daily Observer (Banjul)

Sunday, 3 July 2011

Africa: Bensouda - ICC Protecting Africans, Not Targeting Them

Fatou Bom Bensouda, the Gambian-born deputy prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has rejected charges it [ICC] unfairly targets Africa, saying the victims were also Africans and that indictments were led by referrals from Africans themselves.

Bensouda is in Ivory Coast to lay the ground work for a possible investigation of war crimes relating to a violent power struggle between President Alassane Ouattara and former president Laurent Gbagbo over a disputed poll. In a joint interview with Reuters and France's TV5 in the Ivorian capital, Abidjan on Wednesday, Bensouda said the high rate of referrals in Africa could just as easily show that leaders on the continent were taking their responsibilities to international justice seriously.

Critics including African Union president Jean Ping have accused ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo of double standards for so far only targeting crimes committed in Africa. "Any time, I hear this about ICC targeting Africa, ICC doing double justice (standards), it saddens me, especially as an African woman. But most of these conflicts are happening on the continent. The ICC's concentration on Africa is always as a result of the engagement of the African people with ICC" she said.

In January, the African Union backed a plan by Kenya to call for the UN Security Council to defer or suspend trials from taking place for serious crimes committed during its disputed vote at the end of 2007, in which 1,200 were killed. Kenya wants to try them in its own courts, but the ICC prosecutor argues it failed to take action for years afterwards. "We say that ICC is targeting Africans, but all of the victims in our cases in Africa are African victims. They are not from another continent. And they're the ones who are suffering these crimes," Bensouda concluded.

Reuters

Monday, 4 July 2011

Libya - Will UN Resolution 1973 Only Hamstring The ICC's Arrest Warrant?

By Graeme Mackay



Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi appears in a live broadcast on state television in Tripoli in this still image taken from video March 15, 2011.

of the said Resolution.

Well, UN Resolution 1973 limitations or not, few can be in any doubt that British and French airstrikes in particular, since military action against Libyan Government forces began on 19 March 2011, have done their utmost to expedite Colonel Muammar Qaddafi's passage to the hereafter. This is of course in his role as Commander-in-Chief of Libya's Armed Forces, not as Head of State, or to cause regime change, which are both expressly forbidden under the terms

Yet here we are after over 100 days since military action by NATO commenced, and although severely weakened by the Alliance's firepower, with no Air Force or Navy left and incapable of striking his external enemies back, the sly old fox remains defiant and determined to continue the fight.

Never were the rebel Libyan forces capable of defeating the Libyan Government forces on their own and it is really only in this past week that there have been signs that a turning point in the rebels' favour may have been reached.

Confirmation by "Free Libya" in Benghazi on 01 July 2011, that the oil pipeline supplying the Az-Zawiya refinery outside Tripoli from the Awbari oilfield had been severed, gives heart to the rebel forces frustrated by the limits of their own armed forces and NATO's air strikes.

Colonel Qaddafi's strongest advantage against his enemies must surely be his loyal coterie of followers and his relatively better trained and disciplined Army. Although of late it has been reported that these have continued to dwindle, it would appear that there is still a sufficient hard-core remaining to encourage his hopes of achieving at least a stalemate.

That is not to suggest that the Libyan Army has been anything but seriously weakened. Speaking to Jonathan Beale of BBC News Europe on 26 June 2011 from his Naples HQ, French Canadian Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard told the reporter that the Alliance is winning the war against Qaddafi:

"We have significantly destroyed his military capacity to the point that he now has no capability to run any offensive."

General Bouchard warned that the Libyan Army "is shielding themselves and using civilians as human shields", citing the example of a multiple rocket launcher being driven inside a house whilst the woman of the house was hanging out her washing on its flat roof.

Despite accidental bombings which have killed many civilians, General Bouchard went on to state when asked about Qaddafi's condemnation of NATO as "murderers and barbarians":

"I believe that he is the murderer. He is the man that's lost the moral authority to command his people."

As for Colonel Qaddafi being a legitimate target for assassination, the General repeats that his orders are not to bring about regime change or to kill a head of state. Some British politicians might care to note!

One more possible turning point to the advantage of "Free Libya's" National Transitional Council (NTC) in Benghazi was the issue of arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague. On Monday 27 June 2011, Chief Prosecutor of the ICC, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, issued warrants against Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, his son Saif al-Islam Qaddafi and the Head of Libyan Intelligence, Abdullah al-Sanoussi for crimes against humanity.

The ICC relies on the law enforcement agencies of the 115 countries that ratified the Court's founding statute, to make actual arrests. Difficult, as not all signatory states are likely to be in agreement with or sympathetic to the charges laid against the "offending" state.

Libya is not a signatory state to the ICC and does not recognise its jurisdiction or statute. Complicating matters further, the Chief Prosecutor confirmed that NATO forces operating presently against Libya and in Libyan airspace, have no powers of arrest. The task of arresting Colonel Qaddafi and any others, falls to the Libyan rebels and Libyan Transitional National Council.

Hardly had the cheering in Benghazi for the ICC's support died down before doubts and problems started to arise as to the true worth of the ICC's actions, both at home and afar.

In a 30 June 2011 editorial in the Ottawa Citizen, it was commented that international criminal law is but so very recent, with its first warrant for a sitting head of state only issued in 2009 against Omar al-Bashir, President of Sudan. The article goes on:

"It's worth noting ...that al-Bashir is still in power and travels with impunity - and not only to small pariah states...he travelled to Beijing this week for a friendly meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao..."

This, the Ottawa Citizen claimed, highlighted just how patchy the application of the ICC's writ is and how dependent upon geopolitics it is, going on to remark:

"The lack of a universal and consistent application of the (international criminal law) severely undermines any potential deterrent effect for future tyrants, and lends a note of believability to Gadhafi's argument that the ICC is simply a tool that western states use against Third-World leaders they don't like."

Colonel Qaddafi, along with others of his ilk, could only have been even further reassured in this view of the ICC and its proceedings when, late on the night of 01 July 2011, the African Union, meeting in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, called on all member states (53) to disregard the arrest warrant by the ICC calling it "discriminatory".

The African Union motion was later confirmed passed, by Daniel Adugna, a spokesman in the AU Commissioner's Office. "Free Libya" in Benghazi took comfort in the fact that the AU did not condemn them but recommended that peace talks should commence between the two parties. Naturally the AU sees itself as the best channel for such talks.

The ICC has a number of very major problems even in the interpretation of its founding principles outlined in its Rome Statute. India and China, to mention only two major states, will have nothing to do with it and are critical of its very establishment. Many countries have signed the statute but not ratified it.

There are yet other countries which have "unsigned" the Rome statute, demonstrating that no administration is bound by the legislation of its predecessor. The most significant country to "unsign" is, wait for it....The United States of America!

When all is said and done though, to arrest Colonel Qaddafi means his removal as Head of State of Libya, just as his death by anything other than natural causes would be against UN Resolution 1973. Did anyone really think this action against Libya fully through?