

**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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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New Vision (Uganda)

Wednesday, 12 January 2012

Julia Sebutinde: The making of a World Court judge

By Edna Mubiru

She had hopes, dreams and ambitions. But, as a young lawyer sitting in a cubicle in Parliament listening to MPs debating, Julia Semambo Sebutinde never imagined she would one day be a judge in the International Court of Justice.

She had no idea that the out-of-sight job she took in the 1979 with the Attorney General's office would be her springboard into international judicial practice.

"I was working under the Office of the first Parliamentary Council. Our work then was to listen to the MPs debate on issues, analyse the debates and then draft laws out of what they had said," she says.

After that, the drafts would be taken back to Parliament and looked over by the legislators, fine-tuned and passed into laws.

"My listening, analytical and writing skills came in handy. Seeing a bill you had drafted being passed into law was rewarding," she says. It did matter that she was earning a paltry sh1,790 per month, but the skills she gained on the job were more important than the money.

"I have always set out to spend at least 10 years on a job to learn as much as possible from it to take the skills into the next job. The money I earned then was little but I baked to make an extra income," she adds.

As other civil servants left their coats hanging on their chairs and went out to make more money on government time, Sebutinde stayed back and covered for them. For 13 years, she prayed for bigger opportunities. Her prayer was answered in the form of a scholarship for a masters degree at the University of Edinburgh.

She graduated in 1991 and joined the ministry of the commonwealth in the UK. She was later sent to the ministry of justice in Namibia, which needed support because the country had just attained independence.

Then came her appointment as a Uganda High Court Judge in 1996.

"When I was appointed, I wondered how I would pull off the job with no experience on that side of the bench. Justice

Samuel Wako Wambuzi, who was the chief Justice then, told me I could do the job because I had all the skills required on the job," she says.

It turned out that her job drafting bills and her work in the UK and Namibia had not gone unnoticed.

"I am a good listener, analytical and I write well. Justice Wambuzi told me I just had to apply those skills on the other side of the bench. And that is much of what I do. When you have two good lawyers, they can be persuasive. So you go back and analyse and see what the law says about their arguments and write your judgement," she adds.



Before long, Justice Sebutinde's name and work were on everyone's lips. Corrupt officers in the Police, Army and Uganda Revenue Authority had reason to tremble because of the inquiries into their operations.

The Sebutinde Commission is one of the most publicised commissions of inquiry in Uganda's judicial past.

In 2005, she was appointed, to the Special Court on Sierra Leone, a war tribunal, established by the UN.

She was later appointed the Presiding Judge in Courtroom II, which was hearing the case against former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor and nine others. The court is handling the last case and her work there will be done by February.

Julia at a glance

Born to Moses Kibuuka Semambo and Idah Semambo

Married to John Sebutinde, they have two daughters

Studied at Lake Victoria Primary School; Gayaza High School for O'level and Kings College Buddo for A'level

Qualifications:

Attained a Bachelor of Laws Degree from Makerere University

Diploma in Legal Practice from the Law Development Centre

Master of Laws from the University of Edinburgh in 1991

Got an honorary doctorate from the University of Edinburgh in 2009

Doing Uganda proud

Justice Julia Sebutinde was recently elected into the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which sits in The Hague. The election process is rigorous because it is countries that vote and not individuals.

Since it was established, the court has had 15 judges, most of whom were men. Judge Sebutinde won absolute majorities in the Security Council and General Assembly to beat Sierra Leone's Abdul Koroma.

In its 60-year-history, only three women have held places at the ICJ. Justice Sebutinde is the fourth woman and first African woman to be elected there. Rosalind Higgins, a Briton who completed her term in 1995, was the first woman in the ICJ.

"This position is not just about me, it is a country position," she says. The electoral process proves this. All the candidates up for election are well-qualified but it is their country relations that give them the extra push.

"I started my campaign to be elected into the ICJ about two years ago. I had to approach various countries to show them that I am fit for the job. However, as an individual I can only go so far. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had to come in and even the President had to liaise with other heads of states to see how they would vote."

Justice Sebutinde starts her nine-year term at the ICJ in February.

"Getting to this point has been a combination of diligence and recognising opportunities. It does not matter where, when or to what family one is born. We are all presented with opportunities and the only challenge is grabbing them and making the most of them," she concludes.

The New Dawn (Liberia)

Wednesday, 11 January 2012

Taylor Linked to Jewel's Defeat

E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Former President Charles Taylor may be far away from Liberia, but there are indications that he still has some level of influence on politics here, this paper has gathered.

According to report, Mr. Taylor, currently in The Hague, awaiting verdict from the Special Court of Sierra Leone, instructed senators-elect from his ex-ruling National Patriotic Party or NPP to cast their ballots against his ex-wife, Senator Jewel Howard-Taylor, during Monday's election for the Pro-tempore post in the Senate.

Senator Taylor lost the Pro-tem post to Senator Gbezongar Findley of Grand Bassa County by 14 to 15 votes.

Taylor is said to have given the mandate on the basis that Sen. Jewel Taylor was among the first members of the opposition bloc, who congratulated President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on her re-election.

The Bong County Chairman of the NPP Marvin Cole, made the revelation Tuesday at the Capitol Building when he explained that before the ballots were cast on Monday in the Senate, Bomi County Senator Sando Johnson, publicly announced that he has received instructions from Mr. Taylor not to vote for Senator Taylor because she was the first from the opposition to have congratulated President Sirleaf on her re-election.

Cole quoted Sen. Johnson as saying Taylor pointed out that Jewel's action put the lives of thousands of Liberian youths, who protested the results of the presidential election at risk, and that her decision did not represent the interest of the NPP. Speaking to this paper Tuesday, Cole said it is unfortunate and dangerous for Taylor to still be melting in Liberian politics.

He pointed out that Taylor's action could undermine Liberia's young democracy, which millions of dollars have been spent for by sitting in the Netherlands and attempting to remote control members of the Liberian Legislature, particularly those from his National Patriotic Party, describing the move as a sad day for Liberian politics.

However, Senator Sando Johnson has categorically denied the allegation, terming it as baseless, unfounded, and is only intended to smooth the sour relationship between Sen. Jewel Howard Taylor and President Sirleaf. Johnson said for a week now, he has not spoken with Mr. Taylor, neither his Nigerian wife nor his lawyer.

"This thing is total lie only intended for Sen. Taylor and followers to gain popularity with President Sirleaf at my expense, because I have not spoken with the Chief, his Wife nor his lawyer. Now, how possible will that be for me, I, Sando Dazoe Johnson, to had received instructions from Taylor not to vote for our standard bearer, and I am the vice chairman for the NPP", he questioned.

According to the Bomi County Senator, the six senators, who overwhelming won on the ticket of the NPP during the October 11 elections, voted for Senator Taylor.

"The reason she did not win is that, she did not lobby well and she should be very grateful for the 14 votes she obtained; that made the election comparative", he concluded. But hours later, the Sen. Johnson called requesting that the story be put on hold.

BBC

Thursday, 12 January 2012

Senegal rejects Hissene Habre's extradition to Belgium

Chad's then President Hissene Habre, in 1989 in Paris Chad sentenced Hissene Habre to death in absentia in 2008

A Senegalese court has rejected a Belgian request to extradite Chad's ex-President Hissene Habre to face trial for alleged atrocities during his rule.

Mr Habre, 69, has been living in Senegal since he was ousted in 1990.

He is accused of killing and torturing tens of thousands of opponents between 1982 and 1990, charges he denies.



Senegal's president said this month he expected the extradition would be imminent - and the appeal court's decision was due to a procedural error.

Reed Brody, a lawyer with the US-based group Human Rights Watch which has backed the case against Mr Habre, said the ruling was not definitive.

He told the AFP news agency that the court said that "Belgium had not annexed the original arrest warrant and other papers" only photocopied versions.

"It leaves the door open to a fresh Belgian extradition request," he said.

After years of wrangling, the African Union recently urged Senegal to either put Mr Habre on trial or send him to a country which would do so.

Senegal arrested Mr Habre in 2005, after he was charged by Belgium with crimes against humanity and torture.

Alleged victims filed complaints under Belgium's universal jurisdiction law, which allows Brussels judges to prosecute human rights offences anywhere.

In 2008, he was sentenced to death in absentia for planning to overthrow Chad's government.

A 1992 Truth Commission in Chad accused him of being responsible for widespread torture and the death of 40,000 people during his eight-year rule.

Last year, Senegal stopped plans to repatriate Mr Habre to Chad following a plea from the UN.

BBC

Tuesday, 10 January 2012

Rwanda genocide: Kagame 'cleared of Habyarimana crash'



Rwandan soldier looks at the human skulls belonging to victims at the genocide memorial in Bisesero, Rwanda, November 2nd 1999 Around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in Rwanda in 1994

A report has appeared to clear Rwanda's President Paul Kagame of orchestrating the 1994 assassination of the country's then-leader Juvenal Habyarimana.

The team - mandated by a French inquiry - visited the scene of the attack to work out the trajectory of the missile which shot down his plane.

The crash was one of the triggers that sparked the genocide.

An earlier French probe blamed Mr Kagame and his allies, but they say Hutu extremists killed Habyarimana.

Rwanda's government has welcomed the conclusions of this new report.

The plane crash on 6 April 1994 - in which Habyarimana and Burundi's leader died - triggered the genocide of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in just 100 days.

The killings came to an end when the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriot Front (RPF) rebel movement, headed by Mr Kagame, captured Rwanda's capital, Kigali.

Elite presidential troops

Correspondents say the court on Tuesday concluded that the missile was shot from a distance of up to 1km (more than half a mile) away from the plane, which was about to land at Kigali airport.

At the time this area was held by the Rwandan army - a unit of elite presidential troops.

The experts say it would be very difficult for forces loyal to Mr Kagame to be in this area and therefore shoot down the plane.

They concluded that it would have been much easier for Habyarimana's troops or French troops who were in the area to launch the missile.

In 2006, a French judge accused Mr Kagame and his allies of killing Habyarimana - an allegation he dismissed as "ridiculous" and which prompted him to break off relations with Paris for three years.

Five years later, in 2011, a former senior ally of the president Theogene Rudasingwa - the RPF's secretary general and a major at the time of the genocide - also accused Mr Kagame. Mr Rudasingwa fell out with the president and now lives in exile in the US.

Mr Kagame has always insisted that Hutu hardliners - who considered Habyarimana too moderate - shot down the plane and blamed the RPF to provide a pretext for carrying out the premeditated slaughter.

Critics of the 2006 investigation said it failed to visit the area of the attack, or interview the nine high-ranking RPF officers it accused of involvement. It said the missile was shot from a distance of four kilometres away from the airport.

French judge Marc Trevidic headed this latest French inquiry, launched - with the full co-operation of the Rwandan authorities - towards the end of 2010 because the French crew of the plane also died.

The team has interviewed six of those accused in the 2006 report and conducted a forensic investigation. Two missiles specialists, two air accident experts, a pilot, two surveyors and a sound expert have reconstructed the sequence of the attack.

'Unhappy'

Following this report, Judge Trevidic can either drop the affair or continue his investigations, which could result in a court case.

"Today's findings constitute vindication for Rwanda's long-held position on the circumstances surrounding events of April 1994," Rwanda's Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo said in a statement.

The lawyer for the Habyarimana family said they are unhappy about the report's conclusions - questioning the credibility of the experts - and they still want someone to be found guilty.

"It does not matter where the shooting took place," Habyarimana's son Jean-Luc told the BBC's Great Lakes service.

"What matters is who fired the missile," he said.

Habyarimana's widow, Agathe, told the BBC that she wanted the French inquiry to find out who had bought the allegedly Russian missile that hit the plane - because that would help to identify those behind the attack.

Rwanda has historically been beset by ethnic tension. It worsened under Belgian colonial rule when the Tutsi minority enjoyed better jobs and better education than the Hutu majority.

At independence, following inter-ethnic violence, many thousands of Tutsis went into exile in Uganda from where they eventually launched a civil war in 1990.

A 1993 peace agreement was supposed to usher in a power-sharing government - but it did little to stop the unrest.

Voice of America

Tuesday, 10 January 2012

Monitors: Latest Judge Conflict Hampers Justice

Khmer Rouge tribunal monitors say a conflict between two judges at the United Nations-backed court will hamper the pursuit of cases against former Khmer Rouge leaders.

Clair Duffy, a tribunal monitor for the Open Society Justice Initiative, said the rare public exchange highlights obstacles facing the court that need to be addressed by the broader international community.

The Cambodian investigating judge and his would-be international counterpart have argued publicly about opening investigations of defendants suspected of crimes against humanity under the communist regime of the late 1970s.

Reserve judge Laurent Kasper-Ansermet said earlier this week that the Cambodian investigating judge had prevented him from releasing important information about two cases in the court.

The Cambodian judge, You Bunleng, responded that Kasper-Ansermet had not yet been officially recognized by the Cambodian government as the international investigating judge, and that he lacked knowledge of the law.

Duffy said the Cambodian government had effectively stalled the official appointment of Kasper-Ansermet, who was nominated to replace German judge Siegfried Blunk. Blunk resigned citing government opposition to the two cases probing atrocities during the Khmer Rouge's four-year rule.

Both cases are strongly opposed by Prime Minister Hun Sen and other members of the government.

Duffy also criticized the U.N. and the donors for what she called their continued public silence in relation to these developments. She said that as a result of these developments, the two cases have not moved forward.

A U.N. spokesman said the organization is "aware of this development" but declined to comment further.