

**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:

Monday, 23 January 2012

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awoko (Online)

Monday, 23 January 2012

Letter from Freetown

Since I got up this morning, Thursday 19th, to write, I have had to work with four candles and one of those poorly manufactured Chinese lamp, wasted dozens of A4 paper, all in an attempt to get the mental pick-up required to do my work in Ernest Koroma's Sierra Leone.



I guessed you've worked it out. There is no electricity, and I am writing on an A4 paper, because that is the only other option, I have a deadline to meet.

This however brings back memories of my old Smith-Coronas typewriter, thousands of miles away, somewhere in the loft of my house in London, where it has been gathering dust for some years now.

I remember my days, first at the Tablet Newspaper at Rawdon street, where the late Richie Olu- Gordon, Frank Kposowa, the Great P, I.B.Kargbo and of course the Guru, amongst many others, used to bash their way, with a fag in their mouth, and a bottle by their side as they littered the floor with pieces of scrunched up-paper, day in-day out as they struggled to clear their heads so as to get a proper, sonorous frame of mind to articulate either the sins of Siaka Stevens' APC One Party rule or the burning issue of the day.

Of course, those days, you will find people like me, Momodu Adams, and Alhassan Sillah, now BBC correspondent in Guinea, plying the streets of Freetown and from time-to-time, with the blessings of Junior Rogers-Wright, getting to know the provincial cities of Sierra Leone. And, with the likes of Christian Williams, Donald John and Kabba Kargbo (all deceased), Munir Kallon presently in the USA, we had so much fun as reporters unlike today, when someone becomes an editor even before fully understanding the roles of a reporter let alone a cub-reporter, if we still have one in the country. But a generation has passed since we journalists bashed out stories and articles on manual typewriters and sent them to the printers on sheaves of paper.

Indeed, in most other offices across the world, except the courts, it's been well over 15 years since the loud clackety-clack of the keys, and the ping of the carriage return bell, could be heard from typing pool, where every mistake meant reaching for the Tippex or starting all over again.

I must confess, apart from the difficulties of writing with four candles and a Chinese lamp in Ernest Koroma's Sierra Leone, and the strain of writing with a pen, as my lap-top is not charged, confirms that there's nothing more boring than people jawing on about how everything was better in the old days. And if I made any such claim for manual typewriters over their computerized successors, I would clearly be telling less than the truth.

At the same time we cannot just dismiss the manual typewriter, after playing such central role in countless millions of working lives across the five continents since the first commercial model went on sale in America in 1874.

Call me what you like, but I reckon that among its much inferiority, the typewriter also had some advantages over the electronic machines that have driven it out of production.

For a start, there was something more satisfying to the senses about using a manual – the weight of the shift key, the ping of the bell, the glide of the carriage, the click of ratchet as you fed the paper in and the little screech it gave when you pulled it out.

Indeed, one can argue that the old manuals also encouraged people to write better, or at least in a more disciplined way. Since making changes half way through was such a palaver, there was a much stronger incentive to get the structure and phrasing of an article clear in the mind before committing anything to paper.

And though it was only marginal, the greater physical effort involved in typing the old way may have encouraged writers to be more economical with words. And for the absence of a spell-check, I grant you, it meant the

inconveniences of keeping a dictionary handy to cross-check both spelling and word meanings. But it was also a powerful incentive to learn how to spell.

After all, since the arrival of the computer and mobile phone texting, most ten-year olds with access to a mobile phone have become familiar with the qwerty keyboard. But can anyone remember a time when standards of spelling were lower? BANG!!! And there is light.

I have to stop for a short while, to charge my mobile phones, get my lap-top out, and have a cuppa ... But as I returned to my desk to continue with my work, I suddenly realized that we are now slaves to technology; no one can challenge the fact that everyone could easily understand the last generation of typewriters, and that man was the master of technology unlike today, when technology has become the master of man.

Did you say technology has become the master of man? Yes Old Boy. And this became clearer to me, as I went through my notes, a few minutes after we got light 6am on Thursday 19th. I was going through the notes I took during a press conference at the YWCA this past Wednesday organized by the Women's Solidarity Support Group (WSSG) and the All Political Parties Women's Association.

I wanted to quote Madam Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff, but I had not recorded her speaking. She had made a brilliant observation but I only took notes, suddenly, I missed my tape recorder. Many years back, I would have relied on my notes. Not anymore, because we are all now slaves to technology.

Thinking about what happened at Fourah Bay and listening to the SLPP Spokesman and the APC Minister of Presidential Affairs on radio this past week, finger-pointing each other like little children caught stealing, I was tempted to write about the delinquencies of the political class – a minority of people in this country who continue to dance around as leaders.

Believe me; the majority of Sierra Leoneans now see our political class as a self-centered and disgraceful bunch of mostly men, who want to slowly take this country back to the dark ages. BANG!!! And there was no light – just after 10.00am the light off again.

With the light off again, and the talk about Fourah Bay banging on, I once again, found it impossible to disagree with Madam Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff "THAT THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN SIERRA LEONE IS A DISGRACE; AND THAT OUR POLITICAL LEADERS ARE A DISGRACE" Indeed, I WILL ADD THAT WE ARE WITNESSING THE BIGGEST STATE FRAUD IN THE HISTORY OF SIERRA LEONE, by a group of people in both political parties who are desperate for power for their own selfish ends but not the betterment of Mother Sierra Leone.

Please take a good look at both the All Peoples' Congress Party (APC) and the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP), what you will notice is that what started out as a glowing opportunity for an historic political leadership from both parties, some 10 years ago, first with the SLPP and now with the APC – has become a depressing display of desperation to either stay in power or to grab power, division and anger trumping reason.

Frankly, the policy differences between Ernest Koroma's APC and Maada Bio's SLPP are minor, the debate is not about substance; it's been mainly about character and identity in an up-coming presidential and parliamentary elections in a country that has been denied the basic ingredients of life by the same people – a minority who continue to dance around as leaders or saviors of our country. But we will talk about that next week.... In the meantime, just a quick word of advice....the Special Court at New-England Ville is NOT going to CLOSE DOWN AS YET!!!!

HAVE a great weekend and God Bless Mother Sierra Leone.
By Winston Ojukutu-Macauley Jnr.

The New Dawn (Liberia)

Monday, 23 January 2012

Taylor to Sue Globe - Hires U.S. Lawyers

Othello B. Garblah

Former President Charles Taylor has written the Boston Globe, threatening legal actions for what he termed as publication of falsehoods in relations to reports that he worked as a hired spy agent for the United States Government. Taylor claims the said article is libelous.

Lawyers representing the detained former president have at the same time written the paper requesting all documents relating to the publication including questionnaires, follow-ups and responses from the US Defense Department.

The Boston Globe quoting US Defense Department officials, last week revealed that Taylor worked as a hired spy agent of the US Government for years, thus unraveling the mystery surrounding his escape from a US prison in 1985.

But in a telephone interview with this paper Sunday, Taylor's Lead Defense Counsel, Courtenay Griffiths QC, said Taylor has not only denied the report, but was very angry and that he is considering legal actions against the Globe, with US lawyers listed to lead the said action.

"I spoke with Mr. Taylor," Mr. Griffiths said. "He was very adamant that he has never worked for any American (spy) agency. The Liberian Security Agencies have worked...His National Patriotic Party of Liberia (NPFL) ...But he as an individual has never worked (for the US Intelligence Agency).

"I know Mr. Taylor is very angry and he is not taking this lightly," Griffiths told the New Dawn.

Mr. Griffiths said he finds it difficult ...and very suspicious that at the time his client is expecting a verdict in March or April this year, efforts are now being made to discredit him.

It could be recalled that in Taylor during re-examination in February 2010 denied Prosecution allegation accusing him (Taylor) of previously working for the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) while at the same time collaborating with the Libyan government which provided support to his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group.

"I have never, ever, and will not ever work for the CIA or any other intelligence agency, never, no," the former president told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges on February 16, 2010 during re-examination by his lead defense lawyer Courtenay Griffiths.

However, in the letter to the Globe dated January 20 and addressed to the Globe's editor, Martin Baron, Griffiths stated:

" I have seen an article in the Boston Globe written by reporter Bryan Bender, dated 17 January 2012, titled "Former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor had US spy agency ties"

My client, Mr. Charles Taylor, has instructed me to emphatically deny that he ever worked for or played any role on behalf of any United States government intelligence agency in his personal capacity.

Mr. Taylor finds it offensive for you to publish what amounts to pure speculation that he would have been useful to the US Government as a source of information regarding former Libyan President Ghadafi, the illegal arms trade, or the activities of the former Soviet Union in Africa. Such unsubstantiated insinuations are distasteful and insulting and amount to the character assassination of someone who is a revolutionary and Pan-Africanist.

In order for my client to ascertain any potential complicity on the part of the Boston Globe in the publication of this falsehood, I hereby request a copy of any materials in the possession of the Boston Globe which were used as a basis for the article, specifically and/or additionally:

- a copy of the initial FOIA request the Boston Globe sent to the US government six years ago;
- a copy of any follow-up request made by the Boston Globe recently;
- a copy of any correspondence the US government, the Defense Intelligence Agency, or the Central Intelligence Agency, sent to you in response, either six years ago or recently;
- a copy of the Pentagon's response which is summarized in the article as stating that "the details of Taylor's role on behalf of the spy agencies are contained in dozens of secret reports - at least 48 separate documents -covering several decades... the details are exempt from public disclosure because of the need to protect "sources and methods," safeguard the inner workings of American spycraft, and shield the identities of government personnel."

Your prompt response to my query would be greatly appreciated. In the meantime, my client is seeking further advice as to what options are available to him, given that he deems the article

See full text of Taylor's Letter To The Globe

Special Court For Sierra Leone Office For The Defence Of Charles Taylor

Courtenay Griffiths, Q.C. (Lead Counsel):

20 January 2012

Mr. Martin Baron Boston Globe, Editor

Dear Mr. Baron,

I have seen an article in the Boston Globe written by reporter Bryan Bender, dated 17 January 2012, titled "Former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor had US spy agency ties".¹

My client, Mr. Charles Taylor, has instructed me to emphatically deny that he ever worked for or played any role on behalf of any United States government intelligence agency in his personal capacity. Mr. Taylor finds it offensive for you to publish what amounts to pure speculation that he would have been useful to the US Government as a source of information regarding former Libyan President Ghadafi, the illegal arms trade, or the activities of the former Soviet Union in Africa. Such unsubstantiated insinuations are distasteful and insulting and amount to the character assassination of someone who is a revolutionary and Pan-Africanist.

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Your prompt response to my query would be greatly appreciated. In the meantime, my client is seeking further advice as to what options are available to him, given that he deems the article libelous.

Regards,

Courtenay Griffiths, QC

Lead Counsel for Mr. Charles Ghankay Taylor

CC: Caleb Solomon, Managing Editor,

Christopher Rowland, Assistant Managing Editor, Washington Bureau,

Crowlaand@globe. coin

Bryan Bender, Reporter,

Salem News (Sri Lanka)

Sunday, 22 January 2012

<http://www.salem-news.com/articles/january222012/obama-rapp-lanka.php>

Top Obama envoy Stephen Rapp to visit Sri Lanka

Mendaka Abeysekera Special to Salem-News.com



Stephen Rapp Courtesy: Wikipedia

(NEW YORK) - Top US Ambassador, Stephen Rapp, will be visiting Colombo over the coming weeks to hold high-level discussions with the government, opposition and civil society groups over the current situation in Sri Lanka, Ceylon Today learns.

Rapp, is the US President's Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes who has served as Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone beginning in January 2007, leading the prosecutions of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and other persons alleged to bear the greatest responsibility for the atrocities committed during the civil war in Sierra Leone.

His visit is expected to be a precursor to international community's push to have the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) report discussed at the March sitting of the United National Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva.

Sri Lanka has been canvassing since the last sitting to gather votes in the hope of defeating any attempt to have a resolution passed against the island at the next sessions, on the country's refusal to submit itself to a discussion of the LLRC report at Geneva.

Diplomatic sources said that all protocol requirements have been set in place to facilitate Rapp's arrival in the island.

Rapp's mission in Colombo is to critically look at the LLRC report and hold discussions with relevant parties on the matter, diplomatic sources said.

US has pushed Sri Lanka for an investigation onto war crimes during the last phases of the war, and in a report published by the State Department in October 2009, it said that “a number of sources alleged that the GSL committed unlawful killings. There is video footage showing purported evidence of GSL soldiers killing captive Tamils in January.”

The report also says that “separately, multiple reports alleged that in the final few days of fighting, between 14 May and 18 May, senior LTTE leaders contacted international representatives via satellite phone in an effort to broker a surrender but were killed after they allegedly reached a surrender agreement with the GSL.”

"Obviously, what's been announced to date has not met the standard," Rapp said commenting on the LLRC in June 2010. "They're telling use it does have that capacity, to investigate these cases, to follow up and call witnesses. We're hearing it, but we're not seeing it."

A high-level delegation led by Attorney General Mohan Peiris met with Rapp the previous year, soon after the same delegation met with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon and others in New York.

A report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in December 2009 also called for the US government to “tighten visa restrictions and revoke U.S. citizenship for any persons who are shown to have committed war crimes in Sri Lanka, whether they acted on behalf of the LTTE or the Government of Sri Lanka.”

Sri Lanka has repeatedly denied any form of human rights offences during the final phases of the war, but the LLRC acknowledged for the first time that surrendeers to the armed forces had disappeared, and called for the government investigate specific instances.

Sri Lanka has been under mounting pressure to discuss the final phases of the war at the UNHRC, but Colombo has been adamantly refusing such a move, pitching the LLRC as its own home-brewed mechanism to look into the conflict.

Special thanks to: Ceylon Today

Straits Times (Singapore)

Thursday, 19 January 2012

American expert to advise UN on Cambodia court

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon on Wednesday appointed the former United States ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues as the special expert to advise the United Nations on assistance to the Khmer Rouge trials in Cambodia.

United Nations spokesman Martin Nesirky said on Wednesday that David Scheffer was well qualified to advise the Cambodia tribunal 'during this critical phase' because he was involved in its establishment. He was also involved in the establishment of the International Criminal Court and tribunals dealing with war crimes in former Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone, and crimes against humanity stemming from the 1994 Rwanda genocide, Nesirky said.

The UN-backed tribunal is seeking justice for 1.7 million people who died of starvation, lack of medical care or execution under the Khmer Rouge's rule in the 1970s.

Three top Khmer Rouge leaders accused of orchestrating Cambodia's 'killing fields' went on trial in late November, and one official has been convicted. Prime Minister Hun Sen has openly opposed expanding the trials by adding indictments of other former Khmer Rouge figures, some of whom have become his political allies.