

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



Simon Chaters and Nina Tavakoli of OTP, displaying their medals won at this year's 21 kilometres marathon in The Hague

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, 12 March 2012

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The New Dawn
Monday, 12 March 2012

Taylor's Lawyers Motion Dismissed

ND Reporter



Judges of the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone Friday unanimously dismissed a request by lawyers representing ex-president Charles Taylor's defense to push the date for his (Taylor) ruling from April 26 to 30.

Mr. Taylor's defense team filed a motion requesting a change in the trial judgment date days after the Court announced on March 1, 2012 that it will hand down its judgment in the protracted trial on April 26, due a prior engagement by lead counsel Courtenay Griffiths in a London High Court.

Griffiths had furthered argued that the timing of the ruling, which is on the eve of Sierra Leone's Independence Day, is in bad taste because a conviction would make Taylor appear as an offering to the people of Sierra Leone. But prosecutors objected the defense request, urging the judges to stand by their originally announced date of April 26.

In its decision Friday, the judges dismissed the defense request, noting that when it issued their Scheduling Order on March 1 confirming that the judgment will be delivered on April 26, this gave Taylor's lead counsel a notice of about eight weeks, which according to the judges "is more than reasonable time for Counsel to make arrangements to be present for delivery of judgment."

The judges also noted that there are other co-counsel as part of Taylor's defense team who would be present in court in a case that lead counsel cannot attend proceedings on that day.

On the point that delivery of the judgment on the eve of Sierra Leone's independence could pose potential risk to security in the country, the judges noted that such an assertion "is entirely speculative and without merit."

For these reasons, the judges maintain that they will deliver their verdict on the guilt or innocence of Mr. Taylor on April 26 as originally announced.

The Telegraph

Monday, 12 March 2012

Joseph Kony 2012: International Criminal Court chief prosecutor supports campaign

Luis Moreno Ocampo, the chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, has defended the creators of the Kony 2012 viral video hit, saying that the campaign has "mobilised the world".

Mr Ocampo, who features in the 30-minute video, which has been viewed more than 73 million times on YouTube alone in the last week, said that criticism of the film and their campaign was "stupid".

"These white kids are spending their time to protect kids of their age in Africa. They are role models," he told the BBC.

Kony is wanted at the ICC for alleged war crimes - accused of kidnapping children. The LRA is notorious for violence including hacking body parts off victims and abducting young boys to fight and young girls to be used as sex slaves.

In the video, Mr Ocampo says on camera: "Stop him... and (that will) solve all the problems."

Kony and his fighters were driven out of northern Uganda in 2005 after terrorising communities for nearly two decades.

"All this hoopla about Kony and his murderous activities is good in a sense that it helps inform those who didn't know the monster that Kony is. But of course, this is too late," Uganda's defence ministry spokesman Felix Kulayigye told Reuters.

"It might take long but we'll catch Kony, dead or alive. How many years did it take to end the conflict in Northern Ireland? So our hunt for Kony can take long but it will end one day," he said.

Kony fled northern Uganda to roam the dense forests of Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and South Sudan. Attempts to corner him and his rump LRA force, believed to be 200-300 strong, have failed.

In a renewed push to bring Kony to justice, President Barack Obama sent 100 US military advisers to the region last year to help Ugandan forces track down the self-declared mystic.

US troops have set up small base in the Central African Republic, where Ugandan soldiers are also operating, though the latest reports suggest Kony is now in neighbouring Congo.

In January 2006, eight Guatemalan "Kaibil" Special Forces soldiers from the U.N. mission in Congo were killed in a botched operation against the LRA in Congo's Garamba National Park.

In late 2008, the United States backed Ugandan-led air strikes and a ground attack on LRA camps in Congo.

These too failed as the LRA leadership slipped into the bush, seemingly after being tipped off, and unleashed a retaliatory killing spree that left thousands dead.

According to Matthew Green, author of a book about the hunt for Kony, *The Wizard of the Nile*, his units were highly organised and armed with recoilless rifles, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, VHF radios and satellite phones.

Green says escaped LRA child soldiers he interviewed expressed contempt for the Ugandan army as a fighting force.

"Much as they might like to grab Kony, the Ugandan military and other armies in the region have repeatedly proved that they lack the necessary helicopter, logistical and intelligence-gathering capabilities," Mr Green said.

"US forces could get the job done, but there would have to be a remarkable shift in the political calculus in Washington for them to consider a kill-or-capture mission."

Fred Opolot, Director of the Ugandan government's Media Centre said the LRA leader was operating in "some of the most difficult terrain anyone can imagine".

"People who are thinking it's taking long to eradicate the LRA menace need to appreciate the overwhelming geopolitical complexities involved in the hunt for these guys," Opolot said.

Ned Dalby, Central Africa analyst for the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, said geographical, logistical and political realities severely complicated the hunt for Kony.

He said the armies of South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic were poorly-equipped, lacked professionalism and had discipline problems.

The US-backed Ugandan army spearheading the hunt for the fugitive LRA leader was more professional, but were not being allowed to enter Congolese territory for now, Dalby said.

The Americans were "no silver bullet", he said.