

**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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The Daily Beast
Monday, 16 April 2012

Awaiting a Verdict In Charles Taylor's War Crimes Trial

Charles Taylor was on trial for all these crimes, and more. Soon, we'll have a verdict.

The verdict on Charles Taylor, former president of Liberia, will be announced on April 26 by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. It has sat for over three years in The Hague to hear accusations that in order to gain a share of Sierra Leone's diamonds, he conspired with Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front to wage Africa's most brutal war against a democratically elected government. Taylor and Sankoh (who died in 2003) are alleged to have trained in Libya at the invitation of Col. Muammar Gaddafi (an "unindicted co-conspirator").

During the war, it is said that Taylor, posing as a peacemaker, presented some of his ill-gotten uncut diamonds to supermodel Naomi Campbell, after dinner *chez* Nelson Mandela. He is charged with murder, rape, terrorism, pillage, sexual enslavement, and recruiting children.

Much of the evidence has been stomach-turning. The RUF fighters lopped off the hands of anyone who had voted in the U.N.-sponsored elections and engaged in widespread mutilation and murder of civilians as part of Operation No Living Thing in Freetown. There is no doubt that they recruited children as soldiers and sex slaves, and killed prisoners of war to eat their hearts out in the juju belief that they would gain their enemies' strength.

But was Charles Taylor in any way responsible for these atrocities? He never set foot in Sierra Leone and the prosecution had to rely on evidence that he was in communication with rebel leaders. That contact was necessary, so Taylor testified, to perform his U.N.-accredited role as peacemaker. The prosecution claimed he was directing his RUF proxies, and in return for diamonds was arranging to supply them with weapons, military personnel, and safe haven on the Liberia-Sierra Leone border.

It will be for the court—a judge from Northern Ireland, a judge from Uganda, and a judge from Samoa (trained in Australia) to determine where the truth lies. Instead of defying the court like Milosevic or trying to disrupt it by defending himself, Taylor retained a British Queen's Counsel (a senior Old Bailey advocate) to represent him throughout the trial. This made it a true adversarial proceeding and enhanced his prospects of acquittal by independent judges on prosecution evidence that has been mainly circumstantial—no witnesses testified to receiving orders from him to fight the war. The judges must be satisfied of his guilt beyond reasonable doubt, so his conviction on all or any of the charges is not a foregone conclusion.



The verdict will be announced April 26., Jerry Lampen / APF-Getty Images-pool

One disquieting feature of the case is the time the court has taken to deliver this judgment—thirteen months, no less, since the final speeches finished. The trial itself lasted over three years, during which time the judges should have been working on their assessments—the issues are complicated but it should not take over a year to give reasons for a verdict. While it is not necessary to follow the lead of the German judges who convicted one of the last Nazis—John Demjanjuk—only two days after the end of his two-year trial, it remains true that justice delayed is justice denied, especially in a court whose first president promised that “our justice, whilst it may not be exquisite, will never be rough.”

At any event, it can be predicted that the judgment will be lengthy. It has been touted as the first international-court decision on the guilt of a head of state (Milosevic having died mid-trial and Jean Kambanda, president of Rwanda, having pleaded guilty before the tribunal in Arusha established to deal with the Rwandan genocide), although purists will note that Admiral Dönitz, briefly head of Germany after Hitler’s death, was convicted at Nuremberg.

Media interest will doubtless center on the findings in respect to Naomi Campbell’s “blood diamonds.” The prosecution alleges they were a gift from Taylor (he denies it)—an example of his gains ill gotten from the war. Some light may also be shed on how Charles Taylor ever became a guarantor, with the U.S. and the U.N., of the Lomé Accord—the infamous peace agreement that put the fox in charge of the henhouse by making RUF leader Sankoh the deputy prime minister of Sierra Leone and minister in charge of the diamond mines. It was Jesse Jackson as President Clinton’s emissary who had secured Sankoh’s release from prison (hailing him as “West Africa’s Nelson Mandela”) and who joined in sponsoring the worst peace deal since the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. “The Lomé Accord stank,” says David Scheffer in his recent autobiography: as Clinton’s war-crimes ambassador, he should have brokered it but says he was shut out. Taylor relies on Lomé as evidence that he only met Sankoh at the request of the U.S. and the U.N.: they wanted him to act as a peacemaker in the region. The prosecution, claiming he was the “godfather” of the RUF, suggests that he exploited this role to deliver the spoils of war into the hands of his proxies. These are some of the disputed issues on which the court must make findings of fact.

His case has already made a contribution to war-crimes jurisprudence. He was indicted at a time when he was president of Liberia, and the right of an international court to override the traditional immunity of a head of state was in some legal doubt. His challenge to the indictment enabled the court to rule that sitting presidents no longer have impunity: they can be arrested by U.N. courts for crimes against humanity. On this precedent, the international-criminal-court prosecutor had no legal compunction in indicting Gaddafi when he was ruler of Libya or Laurent Gbagbo while he was still claiming the presidency of Ivory Coast.



The Taylor trial will serve in other respects as a useful guide to avoiding the mess that was made of the trial of Saddam Hussein. Taylor's trial was moved from Freetown to The Hague because of security concerns. There, he has been tried fairly by independent international judges, unlike the politically manipulated jurists who condemned Saddam. Taylor will not face the death penalty (he would inevitably receive a long sentence if convicted and the U.K. has agreed for him to serve it in an English prison). This would be a more just and seemly result than the obscene cellphone pictures of the hanging of Hussein or the lynch law visited upon Gaddafi.

If Charles Taylor is acquitted, the prosecution can appeal, unlike prosecutors in the U.S. and the U.K. That would keep him in The Hague, perhaps on bail, for several more years. Or he could be returned to Liberia for trial for different offenses under local law. He could not, however, be sent back to Liberia if there were any prospect he could face the death penalty. Once in the custody of international law, even the worst criminal's life is safe.

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New Democrat (Monrovia)

Thursday, 12 April 2012

Liberia: 14 Days to Judgment Day

Judges of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone will decide whether Mr. Charles Taylor bears the greatest responsibility for the war crimes in neighbouring Sierra Leone, or whether he is the subject of lies for political reasons as he and his lawyers have argued.

Mr. Taylor, from the onset, insisted that the case against him is 'politically motivated', and that he is a victim of western power play.

After the end of the trial, several prosecution witnesses were sought after to change their testimonies against the erstwhile leader of the rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia and for guilty of perjury.

Mr. Taylor's lawyers then entered a plea for a new trial, contending that the war in Cote d'Ivoire offered new evidence and circumstances in favour of their client. Their request was rejected.

As the verdict's date, 26 April 2012 was set, the defense lawyers again pleaded for the date to be extended. Again, the court rejected their request, and the verdict will be handed down in 2 weeks.

It is difficult to predict the outcome of a guilty or not guilty verdict. Mr. Taylor still enjoys admiration amongst his loyalists here, and they are said to be praying for acquittal.

If he is acquitted, there are fears that a new and fluid political security environment will rock the country and region. Declassified US embassy cables note that rebel command and control structures remain in tact.

On the other hand, if he is found guilty on any of the 11 counts and sent to Britain to serve whatever sentence the court hands down, reactions here are unpredictable.

In Sierra Leone itself, with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), described as Mr. Taylor's proxy army, a spent force many of whose leaders are still in prison, jubilation is expected if it is a guilty verdict. All this will be known in 14 days beginning today.

The Independent

Monday, 16 April 2012

Lost boys: What became of Liberia's child soldiers?

In the 1990s, Liberia was torn apart by a civil war in which child soldiers fought for the guerrilla leader Charles Taylor. As an international court delivers its verdict on Taylor, Finlay Young meets the former fighters back in Africa – now grown up, but not regretful of their past.

On the streets of Liberia's capital Monrovia, the morning is a time of hope apparent. This is when the pavements swarm with children making their way to school. They sashay along, a shifting kaleidoscope of brightly coloured uniforms. Some here remember childhoods of a different stripe. They were generals, corporals and captains. They answered to names like Walking-Fucking, Frisky-Rebel and Domination. Bloody-eyed and dressed garishly for battle, they stared out insolently from magazines on news-stands across the world. They were child soldiers, both victims and perpetrators of Liberia's 14-year civil war, which ended in 2003.

This spring, global attention has been drawn once more to the use of children in war. Released in March, Kony 2012, a 27-minute film about Ugandan Joseph Kony's underage militia, has been viewed over 80 million times. In the same month, Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga was found guilty by the International Criminal Court of recruiting child soldiers. But it was a charismatic American-educated Liberian who, back in the 1990s, perfected the practice.

On Christmas Eve of 1989 Charles Taylor, fresh from guerrilla training in Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, entered Liberia from the north with around a hundred other rebels. What started as a mission to overthrow the brutal regime of president Samuel Doe would turn into prolonged conflict between a cacophony of warring factions. Over 100,000 people were killed. Liberia became the most infamous bloodbath of the 1990s, with Taylor the pariah-in-chief.

In 1997, a populace tired of war finally voted to give him what he wanted, making Taylor Africa's most notorious warlord-cum-president. Still peace did not come. Taylor ran the country as a personal fiefdom, looting its resources and fomenting rebellion across West Africa. Not until August 2003, with rebels approaching his mansion and the international community applying strong pressure, would Taylor finally relinquish the throne.

The recruitment of child soldiers into countless 'Small Boys Units' (SBUs) is one of numerous alleged international crimes for which he is now being prosecuted at the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone, in The Hague. On 26 April, the court's verdict is likely to make him the first African head of state to be jailed by an international court. However, thousands of the children who fought for him remain, scattered across the land they once ruled with guns. Now adults, how have they rebuilt their lives since their 'Papay', Taylor, left them?

Hidden on the seaside just off the long, straight thoroughfare that leads into the centre of Monrovia, there is a ghetto area known as 'The Old GSA'. Hundreds of demobilised combatants from all factions squatted in the derelict compound of the Government Services Agency (GSA) during and after the war. It became a vice den: joints available for five Liberian dollars (5p); girls for 150 (£1.50). On 29 February, the city mayor Mary Broh razed the whole area without warning, calling it "a toilet". It is here, amid the fresh rubble of their former homes that I meet countless young men who were Taylor's children. They are known as 'Gro-na boys' – boys who raised themselves, alone.

Alfred 'Sex' Sargbah is an articulate 31-year-old. He tells me how he was drawn into the war: "I was sitting with my grandparents when the rebels came. They picked me because I was the strongest." He speaks with pride. After a month of training, Alfred the 13-year-old was well on his way to becoming 'Sex', the rebel. I listen for regret in his voice, but hear only nostalgia.

"We were the Jungle Justice group! We could go through the bush to anywhere, on mission for Taylor. Some men would stop and cry, too tired to continue. We would just 'Boom', then bury them." He mimics the motion and sound of shooting a kneeling man.

Prince 'Small-Soldier' Kamara, now aged 28, recalls his excitement when, after being taken from his parents as an eight-year-old, he was first given a gun.

"The AK-47 was not too heavy. We would drag it along the ground behind us. But it was the Uzi I loved. I knew it from the Chuck Norris movie Delta Force." For many child soldiers, coming from rural poverty, their weapon was the first modern tool they had laid hands on, Hollywood movies their only textbook.

Prince can remember his first battle. "The scent of gunpowder, eyes stinging from smoke, your friend crying... it was terrible. I missed my mother at that moment. But then we captured some Nigerian peacekeepers, took them to our HQ. Then I felt so proud. People called me a big man." From then on it was easier. Prince would fight for the next 11 years.

Despite their tender ages, neither man thinks of himself as having been a "child soldier". Their talk is rather of becoming "freedom fighters", achieving adulthood by becoming a "soldier". As such, the macabre war stories of their childhoods are recounted with an absence of self-pity, and often with a sense of pride.

John 'Easy Water' Kolubah carries a permanent reminder of his violent youth. In 2002, a bullet shattered his shin bone. His lower leg was removed. He is not resentful of the injury – his rebel name Easy Water was a reference to his calm nature – but he hates the disempowerment that characterises the lives that men like he, Alfred and Prince now live. "We were soldiers. Now we are parasites: to grow, we have to live on something else. It makes me feel too bad." His injury carries a stigma. "People in big cars, they wrinkle their noses, like 'You fought for Taylor, you're crippled, you deserve it'." He looks at the ground. "We just didn't have the money to run away to America like they did."

While there is almost a total absence of formal job opportunities for the occupants of the Old GSA, not all are reliant on others. Every morning a Sierra Leonean known only as Scorpion King sets off in relentless pursuit of buried scrap metal. He plays an unlikely role in the globalised world: the scrap he unearths is transported to China on container ships, where it is used for factories and skyscrapers.

"I don't remember my given name now," he tells me. As a cousin of the notorious leader of Sierra Leone's Taylor-supported Revolutionary United Front Sam 'Mosquito' Bockarie, Scorpion King's earliest childhood memories are particularly brutal. He describes, without emotion, the process by which he and his infamous group would cut off the limbs of civilians in Sierra Leone. "Long sleeve, short sleeve," he says, running his finger across his arm first at the wrist, then at the bicep. He would later fight for Taylor in Liberia. Now, he earns 300 to 700 Liberian dollars [£3 to £7] each day. Apart from the drug dealers, he is one of the only ex-child soldiers at the Old GSA with a regular income.

Things turned out a little differently for Roland Duo. After being taken by Taylor's rebels aged 14, he embarked on a prodigious, bloodstained rise. He became chief-of-staff of the feared Navy Marine Division, and then a key player in Taylor's lucrative import and export rackets. He is now a wealthy real estate developer, and the holder of a Master's degree.

It is 9.30pm when I am summoned to an empty bar to meet him. This 'big man' of the Liberian conflict cuts a diminutive figure in person, and offers a hand far smoother than those I grasped at the Old GSA. "There were many boy soldiers," he says softly. "But I was gifted. They were taking drugs, marijuana. My head was clear, always clear. I was only in the Small Boys Unit for two months before they saw my capabilities."

According to witnesses before Liberia's post-war Truth and Reconciliation Commission, his capabilities included the recruitment of children as young as nine, widespread looting, and overseeing violence including one massacre where over 350 civilians were hacked to death and thrown into a river. In his testimony before the body in 2008, Roland Duo denied personal involvement in any egregious human rights violations.

His explanation for how child soldiers came to fight reveals the desperate pragmatism of many caught by the Liberian Civil War. "Parents would send young ones out to look for food. I would feed them, clothe them. Sometimes they became friendly with me and my soldiers, and would follow us. We had food, you see? One might be very young but also strong." Later, I ask the man who led me to Duo to explain the logic of recruitment further. Dustine 'Trouble' Tegli is now working as a driver. He joined voluntarily as an 11-year-old in 1993, and subsequently led a 360-strong boys' militia called the 'Death Row Group'.

"Sure, I wish there was no Small Boys Unit," he says. "But you know that the next day, another armed group will drive through, and you have just left one more man that will fight against you." A general's power was almost entirely dependent on the amount of people he had under him. The bigger the group men like Tegli and Duo would marshal, the more security, the more recognition they would get from Taylor.

I ask Tegli, himself a father of two, if he harbours any regrets. He thinks f over his answer carefully. "Looking back, I would not use such profane language."

Alfred 'Sex' Sargbah, who I met at the Old GSA, wants me to meet the friend who currently looks after his 16-month-old daughter Sameria. Taweh Golafale lives with her husband in a one-room wattle and zinc house situated in another squatter community. While women were predominantly victims of the chaos, Taweh's story is less clear-cut. "It was 6 April, 1996 that I joined the war, on Broad Street, Monrovia. I was carrying a load on my head, walking with my friend. One general said, 'Hey you, put your load down, from now on you are my woman'." It was unwise to say no to a general during the civil war. But Taweh's new life with an NPFL general named 'Scorpion' turned out well. "I became used to him. I came to love him, actually, and pray for him when he went to fight."

Her friend Diana Korgbaye, another former rebel 'wife' smiles sadly. "In war-time, there's no real love." Her tale is more typical. "I was raped before I knew about those things. He forced me to be his wife." She snorts. "He had about 30." In the Liberian war, young men with the power of the gun could take their pick. Still, many women felt better off once with rebel groups. Diana followed her husband across the country, frontline to frontline, for a decade.

At the age of 16, Taweh Golafale became a general in control of Taylor's so-called 'Wives Units', taking her husband's rebel name as her own. She shows me the bluish tattoo of a scorpion on her left arm. "I did it because I saw the other people there getting so many things. You could get more food, clothing, anything you want at all. On the frontline you took your salary."

For some former child soldiers, like Starface Mannaray, the 'Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation and Reintegration' programme, part of a post-war UN peacekeeping mission, provided practical skills and a gateway into civilian life. "'Ex-combatant' isn't written on my face," Starface tells me as he finishes repairing a rusted wheelbarrow at his roadside welding shop. But for many others, the process merely fuelled great hopes, now dashed.

Alfred Sargbah graduated from high school in 2005, and took computer classes. Still he is jobless and homeless. "Some believe that this is just how life goes. Those guys, they don't think, they just live. I can't go and dig iron, break rock. I'm an educated man and a soldier." He blames the stigma of his past for his present plight, and imagines a parallel existence untainted by war. "I see the same person I am, but parking a shining jeep, wife and children next to him. He's not more than me. He just didn't fight."

Since leaving his own life as a child soldier behind, Morlee Gugu Zawoo, Sr has devoted his life to helping people like Alfred rebuild their lives. He bounces around the central Monrovia office of the Network for Empowerment and Progressive Initiatives (NEPI), the organisation he and two other former combatants founded in 2004. He describes counselling he received in 1998 from a Lutheran church as "the turning point of my whole life... If I can have a transformation, then anyone can."

Interested in why this transformation has proved so difficult for other ex-fighters, I ask NEPI's chief trainer, Thompson Borh. He has a theory: he describes how the Liberian war caused a normal, peace-time "Community A" to be subsumed by a new "Community B". In this new community, the accepted rules and logic became the exact opposite.

"Most child soldiers quickly forgot or were never old enough to remember the rules of Community A, but became highly evolved for success in community B." The way he explains, it sounds rather like *The Lord of the Flies*, with Liberia the island – only the British soldier of that story never came.

The mechanic who fixes my motorcycle later that evening puts the challenge in helping ex-combatants more simply. "Can you teach a monkey not to jump?"

I'll call him Paul. A handsome man in his early thirties, he asked if I could change his name for fear of recrimination from associates of Taylor. He owns a modest house that he built for his family with the proceeds of the business he started. Nothing in his sensitive manner is suggestive of his past, which is a carefully-guarded secret. It is not until he shows me a photo of himself, in Charles Taylor's office, that I truly believe that he, too, was a child soldier.

It is hard to picture the suave young man before me fighting in Liberia's war. Paul laughs, slightly embarrassed at his past as a flamboyantly-costumed militia. "I would mark my face, put leaves all around me. It sounds crazy, but it worked. These small boys in the bush; walking, walking into bullets and looking like devils." Paul compares this masquerade to a man going to a football match. "Don't he and his friends disguise themselves, paint their faces, to act completely crazy? Then they go home and everything is normal. For some of us, it was like that."

Paul was a well-brought up boy who joined Taylor to avenge his father, flogged to death by government troops. He has never smoked, drunk, or taken drugs. "Some of us remembered that there would be a tomorrow. And that's today, you know?"

Paul doesn't deny the abject barbarity of what went on under Taylor's regime, though he is adamant the 'Chief' did not have full knowledge. He describes visiting a unit that had become cannibal. He grimaces and swallows. "I can't say why. It's war, bad things happen. You do something one time in horror, second time you feel bad, but the third time? Third time, you don't even notice."

Paul soon became part of Taylor's Special Security Service, a favoured bodyguard to the man himself. He explains the fervent devotion Taylor inspired in his child soldiers.

"It was all about his personality. He always had time. He would encourage you, always. He paid me through all my school, can you believe that? And the whole time I knew him, he never, ever appeared

afraid." Paul describes "an absolute widespread feeling that Taylor was no ordinary man. That he was God-sent, blessed, a son of David."

Paul will concede that life in Liberia is better now, under president and Nobel Laureate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. But that is his head talking. What follows comes from the heart.

"I miss him though, now, so, so badly. You have to understand, we felt there was always the future, that we, his young boys, would be able to do the things he couldn't, to change things, make them better. That's how I feel now. I feel so sad we didn't get the chance to do that for him."

As he walks me up his flower-lined drive, Paul tells me one last story. "I returned to my home village with my AK, the first time since I joined. I was 11, 12 maybe. My mother asked if she could hug me. I said no. She asked if she could shake my hand. I said she should just get me a glass of water."

Paul still takes his mother to church when he sees her, but their relationship never recovered. "That attachment, mother to son, was completely broken. The revolution did that."

I return once more to the Old GSA. The previous night, the first cough of Liberia's punishing seven-month rainy season had arrived, sending locals scarpering for cover in the dark. Makeshift shelters of tarpaulin and sticks have sprung up on its fringes. The mood is subdued as joints are passed around. A violent altercation breaks out over nothing. Prostitutes in beautiful, incongruous dresses head out to work. The Community B mentality thrives in such bleak spaces, where the world outside seems distant. Times like this see Taylor's children reminisce on the past, when they had power. They long for the return of their 'Papay' Taylor like a child does an absent, errant father.

Only the youngest among them, 25-year-old Edwin 'Bubbles' Kelly, disagrees. He was a particularly violent young killer in the Taylor government's Anti-Terrorist Unit, a blunt instrument used for Taylor's dirty work. Largely illiterate, in and out of prison ever since, his eyes are sunken, defeated.

"Taylor was a bad, bad, man. He put bad things in my mind, made me see human beings like chicken. Now just look at me."

The Guardian

Monday, 16 April 2012

Counsel says Interahamwe leader won't receive fair trial in Rwanda

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) last week conducted a hearing on an application to refer genocide-accused, Bernard Munyagishari, to Rwanda for trial.

ICTR Defence opposes Munyagishari's transfer to Rwanda: In a hearing on Thursday, the defendant's counsel, Philippe Mariceau, claimed his client would not receive a fair trial if transferred to Rwanda.

He said the Tribunal was responsible to try Munyagishari, who was President of the Interahamwe in Gisenyi prefecture, Northwest Rwanda in 1994. But in his response, Prosecutor James Arguin told the court that the accused would receive fair trial if transferred because Rwanda has made material changes in its laws and expressed readiness to meet international standards.



Detainees in Mali in safe hands: The Tribunal's Spokesperson Roland Amoussouga said on Tuesday that the prisoners serving their sentences in Mali are safe despite the current situation in the country, where President Amadou Toumani Touré was toppled by a military junta last month.

Amoussouga said he had written to the families who had expressed their concern and assured them that all prisoners were in good condition and that he had talked to them over the phone last week.

Meanwhile, President Joseph Kabila said mid last week but would not surrender him to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. Instead, he said, Ntaganda would be tried in the DRC.

The ICC has been seeking Ntaganda's arrest for six years on war crimes charges for allegedly conscripting children and using them to participate actively in hostilities.

In the meantime, on Tuesday, defence counsel Xavier-Jean Keita claimed that Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi could be "sentenced to death and then executed" if he were to be tried in Libya.

ICC judges have ordered Libya to make arrangements to hand over Muammar Gaddafi's son, but Tripoli is insisting on trying him on its soil.

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi is wanted by the court for crimes against humanity.

SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN

The New Times (Rwanda)

Sunday, 15 April 2012

Rage as U.S. Court Bails Genocide Suspect

By Eric Kabeera

Government has expressed concern over the release on bail of Genocide suspect Beatrice Munyenyezi, an act that is seen in Rwanda as the continuous reluctance by the west to bring to book Genocide architects.

This comes after a judge in a New Hampshire court in the US released Munyenyezi who had been waiting for her retrial in a case where she is accused of having lied about her role in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to obtain U.S. citizenship.

She is charged with two counts of lying on immigration documents when she applied to enter the U.S. in 1995 and to obtain her citizenship in 2003.

If the trial goes through and subsequently court convicts her, she is likely to be deported to Rwanda to face Genocide charges on which she was indicted.

Munyenzezi, who is a wife of a Genocide convict Arsene Sharlom Ntahobari, had been in custody since her arrest in June 2010.

Ntahobari, together with his mother Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, a former minister were convicted to life imprisonment by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

The 42 year Muyenyezi is accused of having, in complicity with her husband and mother-in-law, commanded extremist Hutu militia and ordered the rapes and killings of Tutsi in Butare, now in the Southern Province in 1994.

Reacting to her release, Prosecutor General Martin Ngoga, described the judges' decision as implication of more violation of the Genocide offence as well as simplicity.

"The moment the jury failed to conclusively decide, the case suffered a set back. Her release is a disappointment. It is a result, among many, of what is likely to happen when Genocide cases seriously as they are, get handled by systems that take them lightly," Ngoga said.

However, according to news agencies in the US, Munyenyezi was ordered confined to her home and must wear an electronic monitoring device.

Besides having electronic monitoring, she can have no Internet contact and her three daughters, age 17-19, must turn in any passports and travel documents they have.

Her daughters may have computers in the house but those must be equipped with monitoring software that requires a user's fingerprint to activate.

After her release, US prosecutors said that they will bring Munyenyezi's case to trial again in September, though they declined to comment on her release.

Munyenzezi's case was last month declared a mistrial after judges failed to reach a consensus but US prosecutors have since appealed.

Eurasia Review

Thursday, 12 April 2012

The ICC Is Criminal – OpEd

Written by: Margaret Kimberley

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is despite its name, a court that advances the cause of criminality. It acts in concert with the most powerful nations on Earth, and allows them to engage in crimes of aggression against millions of people all over the world. Only the powerless are ever punished and the aggressors use the court to behave as if they were the injured parties.

The world sees this institution in a benevolent light, assuming that it is a means of protecting humanity from the whims of evil doers in high places. Yet after nine years of existence, the ICC has managed to prosecute mostly little known African dictators and a few Serbians thrown in for good measure.

Ironically, after having opposed the establishment of the ICC and after failing to ratify the treaty that brought it into existence, the United States is now its biggest cheerleader. The Bush administration was terrified that Americans, including Bush, Cheney and the rest of their henchmen and women, might be punished for their transgressions around the world.

It is strange that after instigating the killings of thousands of people in Iraq, that neither Georg W. Bush nor Tony Blair have any reason to fear being brought to justice. They travel around the world, unafraid of punishment, giving speeches, writing books, making money, and having no worries whatever about getting their just deserts.

They had even less reason to worry after Barack Obama succeeded them. As the more effective evil, Obama knew that he needed to eschew Bush regime ham handedness in international relations. While simultaneously refraining from ratifying the treaty which brought the ICC into existence, Obama and company constantly offer up others to put in the dock in the Hague.

Last year Barack Obama, David Cameron and Nicholas Sarkozy decided to carve up Libya, using NATO to do their dirty work, killing an untold number of civilians in the process, and they too have no fear of prosecution. Lead ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said as much while the crime was being committed, openly taking the side of the West. Moreno-Ocampo lied to the world, claiming that the Libyan government distributed Viagra to soldiers in order to use rape as a “weapon of war.”

The charge was a lie, made up out of whole cloth. If there was any pretense of ICC impartiality, Moreno-Ocampo himself dispelled any such notion. The anything but disinterested prosecutor is now featured in the latest Kony 2012 video, ending any debate about whether or not the phony, web driven, ginned up outrage has any standing in reality or truthfulness.

While Obama and Clinton try to scuttle Kofi Annan’s Syrian peace plan and hint at President Assad’s prosecution before the ICC, the ICC shows its true colors. When Palestinians petitioned the ICC to investigate war crimes committed by Israel in Gaza, they were turned away. Moreno-Ocampo determined that because Palestine has not been recognized by U.N. General Assembly it has no standing to seek justice for the 2,000 people massacred by Israel in 2008 and 2009. The hypocrisy is blatant, and proves that the United States and its allies present the greatest threats to peace in the world.

At the United National Antiwar Coalition conference last month, this columnist asked professor and author Vijay Prashad why the ICC prosecutes Africans and token Serbs, but never threatens anyone in

Washington, London, Paris or Jerusalem. His answer was simple. "It is just international racism. I think there is no (other) way to explain it."

George Orwell said, "Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable." Those words are still true, humanitarian missions and "responsibility to protect" are in fact euphemisms meant to promote good old fashioned imperialism.

The fact is that the United States, Israel and their European allies never protect anybody. They continue doing what they have done for decades, deciding who is inconvenient and therefore disposal. The human toll is "collateral damage" and quickly forgotten.

There are of course people and nations who cause other human beings great suffering in the world. They should be stopped, but they should all be stopped. Joseph Kony has actually killed fewer people than the president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, but Museveni is a friend of the United States, so no social media campaign to will be directed at getting him before the ICC.

Until there is greater justice in the world, that is to say when the rich capitalist nations have rivals for power, perhaps a court dedicated to punishing human rights violations would be a viable option. Right now it is fairly useless, because it was not created by people with honest intent.

Perhaps a simple name change is in order. Is Court for International Criminals a better name? How about Criminal Court International? For once, political language would be honest and George Orwell would be proven wrong.

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Congo president calls for arrest of wanted warlord



FILE- In this June 30, 2010 file photo, Congolese former warlord Bosco Ntaganda in his national army uniform attends the 50th anniversary celebration of Congo's independence in Goma in eastern Congo. In a marked turnaround, Congo's president Joseph Kabila called Wednesday, April 11, 2012 for the arrest of Ntaganda, a notorious ex-warlord and army general, who has been allowed to walk freely despite an international indictment, an official said. Ntaganda is accused of using child soldiers for fighting in Ituri, in northeastern Congo, from 2002 to 2003. (Alain Wandimoyi / AP)

for

serving in the country's army despite an international indictment on war crimes charges.

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — In a marked turnaround, Congo's president called Wednesday the arrest of a notorious ex-warlord who has been

Bosco Ntaganda is accused of using child soldiers for fighting in northeastern Congo from 2002 to 2003. He was first indicted on war crimes charges in 2006 by the Netherlands-based International Criminal Court.

President Joseph Kabila said Wednesday that Ntaganda should be arrested and face a military tribunal in Congo, presidential spokesman Andre Ngwej told The Associated Press by telephone. Kabila said the military doesn't need to hand Ntaganda over to the ICC.

"We ourselves can arrest him because we have more than 100 reasons to arrest and judge him right here (in Goma), and if not here, then in Kinshasa or elsewhere in our country," Kabila said in the Swahili language.

The president made the comments during a meeting with community leaders in the country's remote eastern province of North Kivu.

In the Hague, Netherlands, international court prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said Ntaganda is a fugitive and needs to be brought to justice. "He should be arrested for the sake and the security of victims and citizens in the whole region," Moreno-Ocampo said.

In the past, Kabila had refused calls to hand over Ntaganda, arguing his cooperation was essential to keeping the peace in the troubled east of the country where numerous local militias and foreign rebels operate.

Ntaganda was integrated into the Congolese army along with unknown hundreds of troops under a peace deal ending a 2009 rebellion that was negotiated as the rebels were about to take the provincial capital of Goma.

The integration has allowed large portions of eastern Congo to come under the dominion of Ntaganda's troops, who are largely from the Tutsi ethnic group and are accused of raping, looting and otherwise brutalizing other communities.

Kabila also noted Wednesday that the army was not supposed to be tribal.

Anneke van Woudenberg, a Human Rights Watch expert on Congo, said that Kabila's government is legally bound to transfer Ntaganda to The Hague after referring the crimes committed in Congo to the ICC in 2004. The Congolese government will have to submit a request to the ICC, if it now wants to try Ntaganda domestically before a military tribunal, she said.

"There is a lot of value in judicial trials taking place close to where the crimes occurred, but after years of conflict Congo's justice system remains weak and is unlikely, at this stage, to be able to try Ntaganda's crimes in a free and fair process," she said.

The Congolese president's announcement follows clashes this week between troops loyal to Ntaganda and other soldiers in the Congolese army in the eastern town of Rutshuru, according to the army spokesman for eastern Congo, Maj. Sylvain Ikenge.

Ikenge said that a colonel and a major responsible for the mutiny had fled into the bush with a small number of troops. "But everything is calm in Rutshuru today and 90 percent of the troops have remained loyal to the government," he said. It was unclear how other troops under Ntaganda's command might react to any arrest of Ntaganda.

In a 2010 interview with The Associated Press, Ntaganda vigorously denied the allegations and said he did not fear arrest on the ICC charges.

"I don't think that the U.N. is able to arrest me in Congo because they have arms that I also have and that can protect me when they try to arrest me," he said. "If it is established that I committed crimes, I won't hesitate to answer them to a court in my country. But I will never accept answering charges by the International Court."

Pressure has been mounting for Ntaganda's arrest since the International Criminal Court convicted another Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga last month of using child soldiers, the first judgment in the court's 10-year history.

The ICC prosecutor stepped up the pressure against Congo last month after Lubanga's conviction, saying he would travel there to press Kabila to hand over Ntaganda.

Moreno-Ocampo also has said that he plans to add charges of murder and rape to Ntaganda's indictment, a move that was welcomed by human rights groups.

Associated Press writers Mike Corder in The Hague, Netherlands, and Michelle Faul and Rukmini Callimachi contributed to this report from Dakar, Senegal.