

**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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Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

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FROM THE
EDITOR'S DESK

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TUESDAY JUNE 26 EDITION
BY ISSA BM KAMARA

On 16th April, the town of Manowa, eight miles from Bunumbu fell to the rebels who had by-passed Daru army base. The fall of Manowa was a blow to the military, and it sent shock waves to the Bunumbu community and nearby towns. The Principal of the college sought urgent military protection for the college from the army garrison in Kenema but to no avail. The security of Bunumbu was raised in cabinet as information reached Freetown of an imminent attack.

The town and the college possessed massive stocks of private and government property and thus a tempting target for banditry.

The casual military response to the potential danger facing Bunumbu convinced the Principal of the urgent necessity to evacuate the staff, their families and students. On 22nd April, the precipitate flight from Bunumbu began and completed on the 28th. Four days later on 2nd May, the rebels struck.

The attack on Bunumbu conformed to a now familiar pattern.

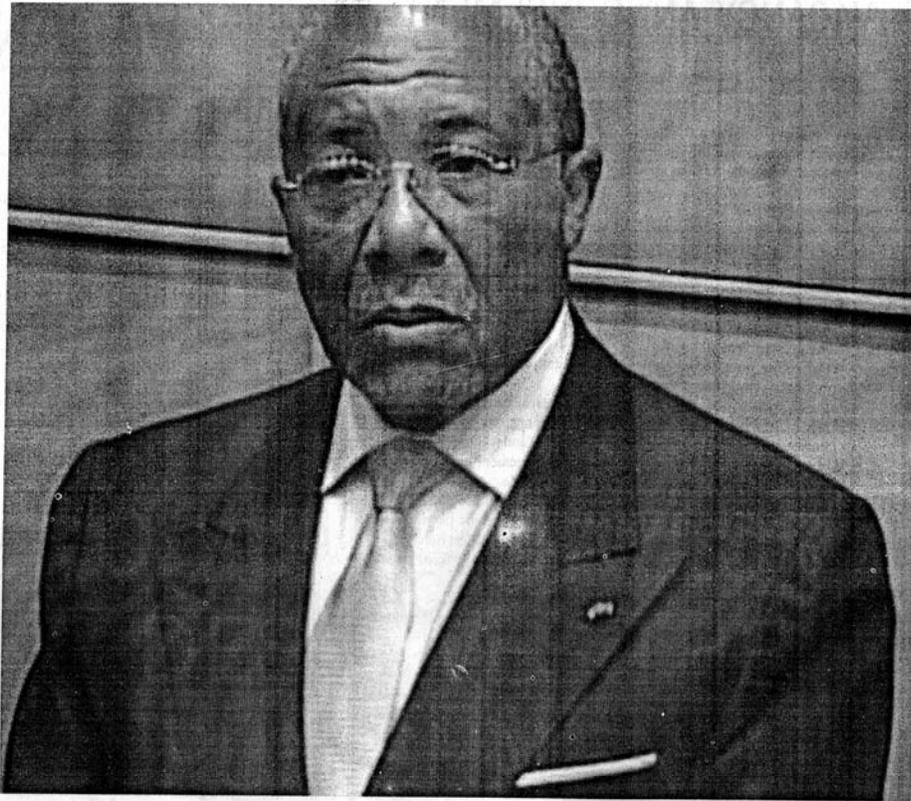
A small rebel group entered the town to reconnoitre for the presence of government troops and to preach the evils of the APC Party and their determination to rescue the people from oppression. Their fears calmed, the people relaxed and resisted the temptation to flee. Meanwhile some of the rebels made a complete study of the geography of the town.

Shortly after, about 100 rebels descended on Bunumbu and quickly and methodically surrounded the town and rounded up the entire population. All radios were confiscated and the rebels threatened to shoot anyone trying to escape. Machine gun emplacements were established at strategic points around the town. Bunumbu was now gripped in fear. But the nightmare had just begun.

For several days afterwards, the systematic looting of the town and the college was carried out. Everything that could be easily moved was taken away through jungle roads across to Liberia.

Harrowing reports by those who had braved death and successfully escaped through the jungle to other towns told of many inhabitants being put to death, and other used as porters to carry looted items to Liberia. The young women many of whom were carried off, succumbed to the inevitable indignities common

CHARLES TAYLOR DESERVES THE PUNISHMENT!



in such circumstances. Many died on the way, and those who survived especially young males were given military training and sent back into the country as rebels.

Bunumbu was established as a base of operations with training facilities for Sierra Leoneans captured in other nearby towns. Rebel reinforcements were also sent to strengthen the defence of the town against a possible government counterattack.

Finally, after a two month delay the combined force of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ulimo troops was galvanized into action. On 4th July, the joint force arrived on the outskirts of Bunumbu by 3.00am and took up assault positions. By 5.30am, Guineans troops equipped with the Russian built multiple rocket field artillery opened up with a deadly barrage of rocket fire. Forty-five minutes later, the bombardment ceased, and Sierra Leone and Ulimo troops moved in, in a single coordinated attack on the town. Then they beheld a sad sight.

As the town lay in smouldering

ruins and the soldiers surveyed the comprehensive destruction wreaked by the bombardment, only a few scattered bodies were found. Faulty intelligence had robbed the joint force of a meaningful victory. As it turned out, the rebels and the entire populace with the exception of the old and infirm had abandoned the town the previous day. It transpired that the combined force moving from Daru based had first attacked the town of Kigbali on their way to Bunumbu. That battle had been fierce and the rebels had lost. Those among them who escaped went to Bunumbu three miles away to inform of the impending on the town. There a public meeting was hastily convened by rebel leaders, during which the decision to evacuate to Pendembu was made.

Bunumbu was finished. For almost sixty years the town had prospered. All too suddenly and so tragically, it joined the growing list of looted and devastated towns in Kailahun district. For a while at least, and except for a military and a timid civilian presence Bundumbu would be little

more than a ghost town, with the grim and visible reminders of the day history visited it.

As the war progressed, several towns in Kenema and Pujehun districts fell to the advancing insurgents. By April 1992, the rebels realized that they had penetrated too deep into Sierra Leone, and that their supply lines were becoming overextended. In some areas they were being fought to a standstill, while in others, they were being pushed back to the Liberian border. But the unpredictable nature of guerrilla war in jungle terrain made the attainment of victory a painstaking endeavour. And the war dragged on.

A definitive assessment by this period, of the full impact of the war, with statistical data was difficult to ascertain. By April 1992, few would have imagined that three years later in 1995 the insurgency would still be prosecuted on a greater dimension of time, space and intensity.

However, it can be said with certainty even at this point, that the devastation in the theatres of combat, and in particular Kailahun and

Pujehun districts, the massacre of innocents civilians and the destruction of private and public property have all have traumatizing effect on the survivors. The consequent refugee problem and of internally displaced people once unfamiliar with such tragedies compounded the trauma. In the words of Septimus Kaikai, "the war has thrown into chaos and disequilibrium, the population dynamics in the country." The pillage of Kailahun and Kenema districts, centres of coffee and cocoa production considerably affected the commercial activity in these commodities. Educational and medical activities became virtually non-existent in the war zone.

With the government struggling to cope with the problems of a declining economy, and the need to establish an acceptable relationship with the IMF and the World Bank, the unforeseen expenditure on the war threatened these endeavours with severe consequences for the national economy, the social and, as it turned out, the political stability of the state.



Author

The New Dawn (Liberia)

Wednesday, 27 June 2012

War Crimes Court Bill Lands At Capitol

E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Calls for the establishment of a war crimes court here seems to be gaining momentum with the submission of a bill before the House of



Representatives, requesting for the formation of such court to prosecute ex-warlords and others who played major role during the country's crisis period.

Grand Bassa County Representative Byron Brown presented a draft bill to the House of Representatives Tuesday through plenary, calling for the establishment of a war crimes court for Liberia.

Brown, who got elected on the ticket of the opposition Liberty Party during the 2011 elections, said the ultimate purpose of the bill is to sustain the peace, achieving genuine national

reconciliation and moving ahead with the national developmental agenda, unhindered.

“This has become the most prudent thing for us to do, my colleagues. It is said that giving aggressors an inch of the way does trigger in [them] false sense of greatness, thereby propelling such aggressors to an unending series of aggressions against the vulnerable of society”, he stressed.

Brown noted that the Liberian Civil Conflict produced many aggressors, both within and outside the nation's frontiers, who committed some of the worst crimes against humanity.

“Some of them planned, financed, supervised and executed the wanton destruction of our country and its human resource. Today, they seem to be clinging to the mistaken belief that their actions against the nation and its people were justified. Even the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that was suggested, as a bridge to the future has been trampled upon, as its recommendations are being thrown into the dust bin, where than do we go for justice,?” the Grand Bassa lawmaker told plenary Tuesday in a determined tune.

He said as a result, Liberians are kept in perpetual poverty, while the alleged perpetrators and their reported conies mellow in the resources of the state with demonstrated arrogance.

“It rests upon our shoulders as representatives of the people, to move to avert the potential re-occurrence of our national nightmare by taking practical steps to restrain the aggressors. One way to do this is by unwaveringly enacting a law that specifically deals with the issue of war crimes committed in Liberia. This will be sufficient deterrence for re-entrance into the theater of conflict with disproportionate consequence”, he concluded.

The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended prosecution of ex-warlords and generals, who allegedly committed heinous crimes during the 14-year civil crisis, but the TRC recommendations, are being politicized. Meanwhile, the bill has been sent to the Judiciary, and Ways, Means and Finance committees to report to plenary in the shortest possible time.

Calls for the establishment of a war crimes court have been repeated time to time, beginning with lead campaigner Mulbah Morlu, who paraded caskets in the streets of Monrovia during a visit here by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Morlu however seems to have abandoned his campaign after he publicly lied that he met with President Obama in Ghana on the matter.

Liberian human rights lawyer Dempster Brown recently announced that he's submitting a bill to the Liberian Legislature for the creation of a war crimes court.

Liberian Observer (Liberia)

Wednesday, 27 June 2012

War Crimes Court Imminent for Liberia? -Lawmaker submits bill and pleads with colleagues for Support



These are former warlords, who took part in the Liberia bloody civil war. Clockwise: Charles Taylor, convicted for aiding and abetting mayhem in Sierra Leone; Senator Prince Johnson, Alhaji Kromah, Sekou D. Conneh, George Boley and Thomas Y. Nimely These are former warlords, who took part in the Liberia bloody civil war. Clockwise: Charles Taylor, convicted for aiding and abetting mayhem in Sierra Leone; Senator Prince Johnson, Alhaji Kromah, Sekou D. Conneh, George Boley and Thomas Y. Nimely

The much publicized call for the establishment of a war crimes court in Liberia to try those responsible for atrocities during the country's civil war has taken a further step with the submission of a proposed legislation to the House of Representatives yesterday.

Piloting the legislation, Grand Bassa County Representative Jeh Byron Browne of the opposition Liberty Party called on his colleagues to see reason in setting up the court.

The Bill seeks "to sustain peace and genuine national reconciliation through the establishment of a court to prosecute people allegedly implicated in atrocities during Liberia's civil crisis," he told his colleagues as he was submitting the Bill.

He argued that national healing and improving on developmental agenda can only be achieved in Liberia if lawmakers could reason in setting up a war crimes court like the one established in neighboring Sierra Leone.

According to Representative Browne, the Liberian conflict produced several "aggressors both within and without our national frontiers who committed worst of crimes against humanity.

“Some of them planned, financed, supervised and executed the wanton destruction of our country and its human resources. Today they seem to be clinging to the mistaken belief that their actions against the Liberian people were justified, and establishing this court to deal with these issues has become the most prudent thing for us to do today,” Representative Browne asserted.

In the case of Sierra Leone, the Grand Bassa County legislator says he wants “the aggressors who have impoverished majority of the people in Liberia while they and their cronies mellow in the resources of the state to be made to account for their respective actions.”

He also said the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which suggested the prosecution of suspected war criminals served as a bridge for the future for Liberians whose rights, he said, had been trampled upon.

As such, he said the TRC recommendations have been “thrown into the dustbin, thereby creating the need for such a court to be established.”

Meanwhile, the proposed legislation was received by plenary of the House and later transmitted to the relevant committee to advise the House in due course.

TRC had recommended the prosecution of several persons for bearing the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed during the civil war and a 30-year ban for other prominent Liberians, including President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, from political activities for making financial contributions to support the rebel factions during the war.

Opinions have been divided on the recommendations with some people criticizing TRC for not seeking peace and others pushing for a war crimes court to try perpetrators of massacres as a way of uniting and reconciling the Liberian people.

Reacting to the divided opinions, the international community, especially the United States of America said that the decision for creating a war crimes court in Liberia should be left to the Liberian government.

When recently asked by students of the University of Liberia as to whether she favored a war crimes court in Liberia, Chief Prosecutor for UN backed Court for Sierra Leone Brenda J. Hollis pointed out that “That decision is left to the government and people of Liberia to determine.”

The establishment of such a court, political analysts say could call for the appearance of many high profile former warlords such as former Field Marshall Prince Johnson, who is now a senator, and Sekou Damate Konneh.

If the TRC recommendation was to be implemented, President Sirleaf would be barred from politics for 30 years for admitting to a US\$10,000 support she gave former rebel leader and convicted war criminal Charles Taylor as “humanitarian assistance.”

TRC report maintained that President Sirleaf’s admittance showed that she participated indirectly in the crisis as her donation may have led to the destruction of lives and property.

Senator Prince Johnson, at a recent press conference in Monrovia, responded to reports that a local human rights organization was intend on forwarding the names of those bearing the greatest responsibility for war crimes in Liberia to the International Criminal Court, also called for the prosecution of Madam Sirleaf, others her referred to as political leaders of the war effort. He stressed that Madam Sirleaf should be prosecuted for “aiding and abiding” as her donated money was used by Mr. Taylor to intensify the conflict.

Senator Johnson also admitted to arresting former President Samuel K. Doe, whose gruesome interrogation was filmed as the then General Johnson ordered his Independent National Patriotic Front fighters to cut off President Doe's ears.

Although he denied personally killing the former Liberian leader, Senator Johnson noted that "I did what I did in defense of my people."

The TRC Report names the leaders of warring factions as those bearing the most responsibility for war crimes and human rights violations who should be brought to justice. Those warring faction leaders cited are: Charles Taylor, NPFL; Prince Y. Johnson, INPFL; Roosevelt Johnson (deceased), ULIMO-J; Alhaji G.V. Kroma, ULIMO-K; George Boley, LPC; Thomas Yaya Nimley, MODEL; Sekou Damante Konneh, LURD; and Francois Massaquoi (deceased), LDF.

The Informer (Liberia)

Wednesday, 27 June 2012

Lawmaker Wants War Crimes Court - to Prosecute Ex-Warlords, Financiers

A member of the 53rd Legislature has submitted a bill in the House of Representatives that calls for the establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia.

In his communication to Plenary of the House, Representative J. Baron Brown said, "It is with honor that I submit to this Honorable body, a bill for the establishment of a war crimes court in the Republic of Liberia, know that, for the ultimate purpose of sustaining the peace, achieving genuine national reconciliation and moving ahead with our national development agenda unhindered, this should become the most prudent thing for us to do.

"The Grand Bassa County Lawmaker said the Liberian civil conflict produced many aggressors within and out of Liberia's frontier, who committed some of the worst crimes against humanity. He indicated that some of the aggressors planned, financed, supervised and executed the wanton destruction of the country and its human resources, an action he said that the aggressors considered justified and did not take to be a mistake against the nation and its people. On May 30th 2012, former Liberian President, Charles Taylor was sentenced to eighty years in prison; a verdict that was later reduced to fifty years by the United Nations backed Court sitting in The Hague, for aiding and abetting war in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Since the conviction of the former Liberian leader, there has been mixed reactions in Liberia, with some Liberians calling for a similar war crimes court in the country. Rep. Brown said "These aggressors, if given an inch, are again bent on pursuing the same path that brought Liberia to its heels, impoverished the citizens, while they and their cronies mellow in the resources of the state with demonstrated arrogance. It rests upon our shoulders as representatives of the people to move, to avert the potential reoccurrence of our national nightmare by taking practical steps to restrain the aggressors" According to Rep. Brown, one way to do this is by unwaveringly enacting a law that specifically deals with the issue of war crimes committed in Liberia.

This should be a sufficient deterrence for making a re-entrance into the theater of conflict, with disproportionate consequences. "I crave your indulgence to look favorably on this instrument and give it your best, so as to stop the blood of our dead compatriots from crying for justice and at the same time, protect the living from the evil machination of the aggressors who are bent on going to extra mile." Following the reading of the communication, it was turned over to the House Committee on Judiciary for action. Representative Brown is the second Liberian to send a bill to the 53rd Legislature for enactment. It can be recalled that Cllr. Dempster Brown few days ago also petitioned the legislature calling on them to establish a war crimes court in Liberia.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra, Ghana in 2003 for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), has since concluded its work and presented recommendations to the Government of Liberia. The TRC labeled some Liberians as notorious perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and recommending that they be prosecuted while it pardoned others for saying the "truth." The TRC also banned some Liberians from holding public offices for thirty years, a recommendation that has been overruled by the Supreme Court of Liberia. Whether or not the House will endorse the setting-up of a war crimes court in Liberia and its subsequent concurrence by the Liberian Senate remains a million dollar question that needs to be answered. (Author's contact, 231886270297; email:

FrontPage Africa
 Wednesday, 27 June 2012

War Crimes Court Momentum : Lawmaker Joins Liberia's Prosecution on Quest

Written by Tom B. Nyenur; Tom.nyenur@frontpageafricaonline.com



Grand Bassa County Representative Jeh Byron Browne

Monrovia - Grand Bassa County Representative Jeh Byron Browne has tabled a bill before the House of Representatives calling for the establishment of war crimes court in Liberia.

On Tuesday, Representative Browne said a war crimes court would help maintain peace and promote genuine reconciliation in Liberia. The Bassa lawmaker is seeking for the court to prosecute those who played key roles in Liberia's 14-year civil war.

"Like former President Taylor who was sentenced to 50 years in prison, after he was found guilty of aiding and abetting the civil war in Sierra Leone, there are those who aided and abided Liberia's civil war," Browne said.

"We cannot afford to see people who masquerading as reconcilers, after they have equally aided and abetted the war in this country that left hundreds of thousands of lives and millions properties destroyed."

Browne said President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and former Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) rebel leader Prince Johnson ought to appear before a war crimes court to clear their names.

"If former rebel leader Prince Johnson committed atrocities and or President Sirleaf did give US\$10,000 to facilitate Charles Taylor's rebel movement as we hear, these issues must be properly disposed of before reconciliation", said Browne. Browne's call for a war crimes court comes on the back of similar requests from other civil society members and political figures.

Last week the Executive Director of the Center for the Protection of Human Rights, T. Dempster Browne, tabled a similar bill before the legislature calling for the war crimes court establishment. Mulbah Morlu of the opposition Congress for Democratic Change has also made similar demands.

Foreign Policy (Blog)

Wednesday, 6 June 2012

http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/06/06/are_war_crimes_trials_worth_the_price

Are war crimes trials worth the price?

Posted By Joshua Keating



Justin Sandefur has a thought-provoking post on the Center for Global Development's blog running some numbers on the recent war crimes conviction of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, which took approximately 9 years and \$250 million:

“The entire budget for Sierra Leone’s domestic justice sector is roughly \$13 million per year, including the Sierra Leone Police, the Prisons Department, all levels of the court system, and the various human rights and legal services commissions. There are just 12 magistrates for the whole country outside of Freetown, and they hear between 4,000 to 5,000 criminal cases per year. The lack of judges, lawyers, and police investigators –even the lack of a few cents in cell phone credit to contact witnesses that might implicate or exonerate a defendant –is a serious obstacle to a functional justice system.

In contrast, a quick tally using the Special Court’s annual budget reports reveal costs of approximately \$175 million for the prosecutions of 13 other defendants in Freetown, in addition to the hefty bill for Taylor’s trial in the Hague. And the Special Court boasted 11 judges and hundreds of staff members for its 14 cases spread over the past nine years. Add on the testimony of Naomi Campbell, and it appears international war crimes have become a red-carpet affair.”

The quick-math takeaway here is that money spend on the trial of one man could have funded Sierra Leone's entire justice system for nearly 20 years.

Sandefur proposes that a with a trial for Taylor "less expensive venue and not-so-high-priced defense attorneys" could have reached the conclusion while maintaining the same standards of fairness. In fairness, these trials generally serve not just to determine the guilt of the defendant -- there's often not all that much question of that -- but as international truth commissions for the conflict they address as well as an opportunity to establish precedent in international law. It's complicated for a reason, but it also seems like a middle ground could be found that seems less like an overpriced circus and less remote from the people affected.

In other news, Clare MacDougall blogs an essay by Taylor's defense attorney Courtenay Griffiths on the International Criminal Court. (Taylor was tried not by the ICC but by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.) Griffiths notes that every indictment handed down by the ICC has been against an African and that "the guardians of "international justice" have yet to find a single crime committed by a great white northern power against people of colour." That may not be a fair critique, but that doesn't mean it couldn't be a persuasive one.

The court's new Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, from Gambia, recently addressed the critique that the ICC is a court set up by westerners to prosecute Africans:

"With due respect, what offends me most when I hear criticisms about the so-called African bias is how quick we are to focus on the words and propaganda of a few powerful, influential individuals and to forget about the millions of anonymous people that suffer from these crimes ... because all the victims are African victims.

"Indeed, the greatest affront to victims of these brutal and unimaginable crimes ... women and young girls raped, families brutalised, robbed of everything, entire communities terrorised and shattered ... is to see those powerful individuals responsible for their sufferings trying to portray themselves as the victims of a pro-western, anti-African court."

It's also possible that the pomp and remoteness of these trials, as noted by Sandefur, are contributing to the perceptions that Bensouda is trying to fight.