

**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:**

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
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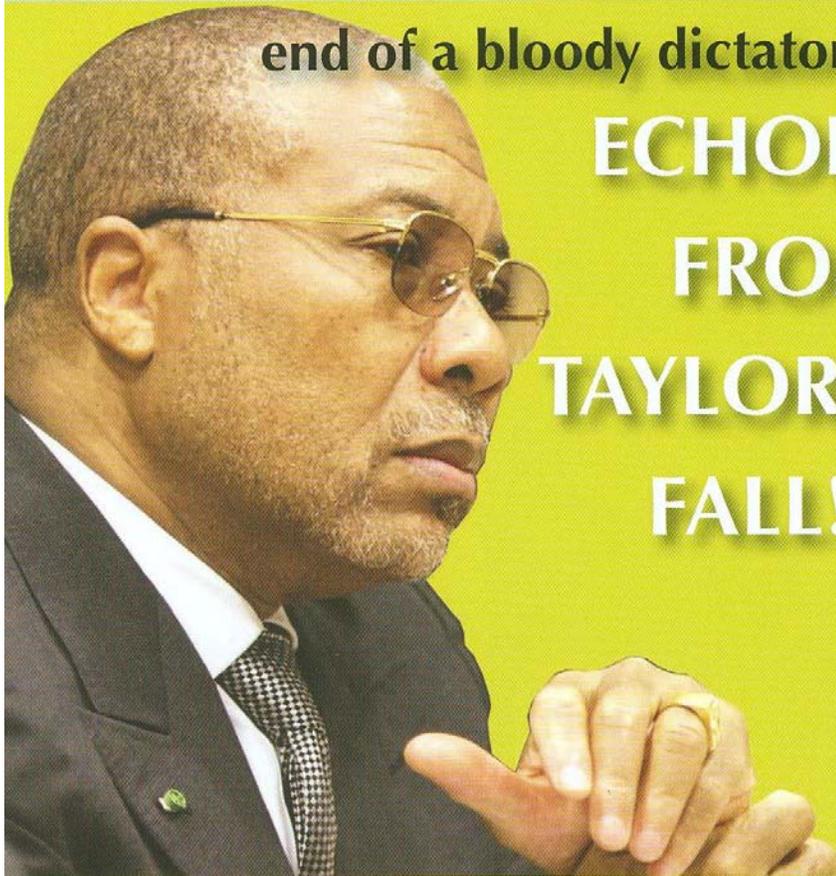
### Local News

End of A Bloody Dictator / <i>Sierra Update</i>	Pages 3-4
FBC to Represent Sierra Leone in Tanzania / <i>Awareness Times</i>	Page 5

### International News

International Justice: Taylor Trial Sets Positive Example / <i>Human Rights Watch</i>	Pages 6-8
Charles Taylor Trial 'Largely Well Run' / <i>New Europe Online</i>	Pages 9-10
After World Court Ruling, Plan to Try Chad's Ex-Dictator... / <i>IFHR</i>	Pages 11-13
Senegal, AU Reach Deal on Trying Ex-Chad Dictator / <i>Associated Press</i>	Page 14

Sierra update issue 0012 /Summer Edition 2012



end of a bloody dictator...

## ECHOES FROM TAYLOR'S FALL!!!

**The United Nations backed Special Court in May this year, slammed a 50-year jail term on the former Liberian Head of State Charles Taylor for his involvement in the civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone – but what does this mean for the people of Sierra Leone more especially his victims?**

*By Abubakarr Kamara in Freetown & Isatu Gbla in Brussels*

Special Court for Sierra Leone judges say the sentence reflects his status as head of state at the time and his betrayal of public trust. Taylor, 64, insists he is innocent and is likely to appeal against the sentence.

He also told the judges to consider his age when making their decision, saying he was "no threat to society". But the trial chamber said given his social background, "rehabilitation" was not likely.

The fact that he had not expressed remorse also affected the sentence, the judge said. He had condemned atrocities across the

world, and had the "deepest sympathy" for victims in Sierra Leone, but stopped short of apologising for his part in the conflict.

The prosecution led by former US military prosecutor Brenda Hollis, had asked for a sentence of not less than 80 years after the former Liberian Head of State had been convicted on 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity having provided the rebels with arms and was involved in planning military operations that led to atrocities. Before pronouncing sentence, Richard Lusick, the Presiding Judge, underlined the gravity of the crimes by recounting a few of the most savage atrocities to which witnesses had testified during the trial.

One woman had been forced by rebels to carry to another village a bag full of human heads. She found it contained those of her own children.

He became the first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes by an international court since the Nuremberg trials of Nazis after World War II.

In Sierra Leone, just as the country was preparing to celebrate its 51st anniversary, then news came in the news that the former Liberia President had been found guilty of aiding and abetting the commission of serious crimes including murder, rape, and use of child soldiers by Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebels in Sierra Leone from November 1996 to January 2002.

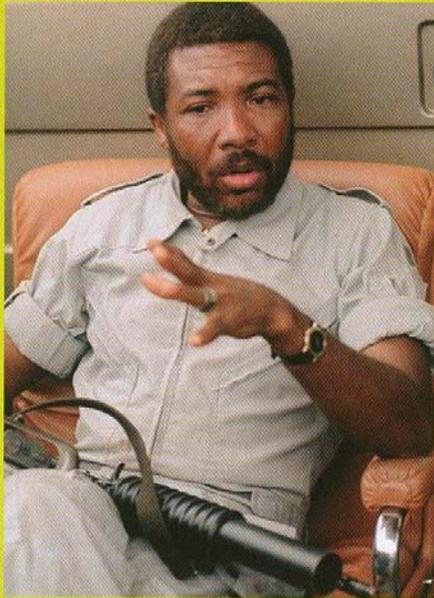
The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Brenda Hollis, had earlier told judges that the prosecution's recommended 80 year jail sentence is commensurate with the "gravity of crimes and the specific conduct of the accused."

Taylor denied involvement in the commission of crimes for which he has been convicted and concluded by expressing his sympathy to the people of Sierra Leone for the harm suffered during the conflict in that West African country.

Taylor's lead defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, in his submission told the court that the

verdict of the judges as rendered on April 26 is a "modest version of Charles Taylor's involvement in the Sierra Leone conflict than that proposed by the prosecution."

Mr. Griffiths pointed out four reasons why Mr. Taylor was to benefit from mitigating circumstances: that the period of offending was not



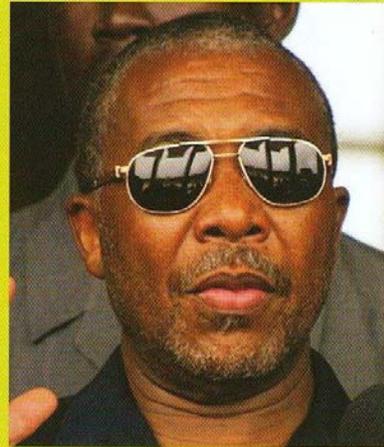
an extended period, save for use of child soldiers and enslavement that cover a more prolonged period in the indictment; Mr. Taylor's role in the Sierra Leone peace process; his voluntary departure from the Liberian presidency in 2003; and his age, being 64 years already.

Mr. Griffiths told the court that if Taylor is sentenced as recommended by the prosecution, it would amount to a life sentence, it would be offensive to good conscience and logic and that it could endanger the peace that the Special Court was established to enhance.

The ordinary man on the streets especially those affected directly and those who carried scars of the war do not care about what is happening at the Special Court sittings in The Hague. Some are of the opinion that if the money that was spent on the Special Court

was given to Sierra Leone on behalf of those affected by the war, it would have improved their lives while others believe it was important as that would serve as a deterrent for would-be perpetrators.

However, the news did not in any way hinder the celebrations nor did it hijacked the



focus of Sierra Leoneans, as most people have no desire to return to conflict and have spent the years rebuilding their lives while Taylor has been on trial. Most people seem to be more interested in brightening up their poverty-stricken homes and their daily survival than justice, while others say they are not part of the trials and therefore do not care about the outcome as it will not change their status quo.

Sitting in his wheel chair, Mohamed Mansaray, a youth residing in Freetown says Charles Taylor deserves to die because of his role in the 11-year senseless war in Sierra Leone.

"The 60 years sentence is not enough for what Charles Taylor has done to this nation. We are walking the streets of Freetown begging for alms because we have been rendered useless. Some of us will carry the scars till death and that's we are asking that he be given the death penalty," the amputated youth said.

While Zainab Conteh in Makeni, whose

hands were amputated during the war, does not care about the outcome of the Special Court matter because she is optimistic her life will remain the same whatever the verdict.

"The Special Court can hang Charles Taylor of jail him for more than a 100 years and it wouldn't change our current status. We beg on the streets to feed our children and send them to school and whether the former Liberian President is jailed or not, I still need to find food for my family."

But Joseph Amara in Bo wants Charles Taylor to run his jail term in Sierra Leone or Liberia under hard labour and not in luxury. He noted that the convict had been enjoying in The Hague to the extent that he was able to impregnate his wife while he was in detention whereas those that were rendered impotent by the war are left on the streets of Sierra Leone begging.

"I personally would have been happy if he was going to run his jail term under hard conditions. If not, then, of what importance is the sentence to us in Sierra Leone?" she asked.

Desmond E.M. Wellington residing in Waterloo, who lost both arms just below the elbows to an RUF machete, says Sierra Leoneans has little or nothing to jubilate about with regards to Charles Taylor's indictment.

He is of the opinion that some people who committed serious atrocities but have international influence were left out of the trials. He believes that the likes of Ex-President Alhaji Ahmad TejanKabbah and some of his cabinet members should have been tried by the Special Courts for their roles but he was quick to point out that he personally didn't see any reason why Hinga Norman was indicted and the Ex-President exonerated.

"We are suffering and therefore Charles Taylor's death is of no significance to us even if it had included all his family members, it means little or nothing to this nation compared to what we are suffering today. The International Community must come to our aid and remedy our current plight or else we are just the same.

## Awareness Times (Online)

Wednesday, 25 July 2012

### **FBC to represent Sierra Leone in Tanzania**

Three students from the Law Department of Fourah Bay College (FBC), University of Sierra Leone, are expected to represent Sierra Leone in Arusha, Tanzania, in November this year at the 2012 Moot Court Competition. The three FBC students are expected to lock horns with other law students from across the world on topics such as International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Prior to their qualification, FBC contended with other institutions including Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), LICCSAL, Njala University and the Milton Margai College of Education and Technology at the Special Court of Sierra Leone in Freetown.

## Human Rights Watch

Thursday, 26 July 2012

Press Release

### **International Justice: Taylor Trial Sets Positive Example**

#### Sierra Leone Special Court Offers Lessons for Prosecuting Highest-Level Suspects

(Brussels, July 26, 2012) – The trial of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor for war crimes and crimes against humanity during Sierra Leone’s armed conflict was a largely well-run proceeding, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. The trial benefited from a high-quality defence, sound handling of witnesses, and dynamic outreach to communities affected by the crimes. At the same time, Human Rights Watch’s analysis identified areas in which practice should be improved for future trials of the highest-level suspects before domestic, international, and hybrid war crimes tribunals.

The 55-page report, “Even a ‘Big Man’ Must Face Justice: Lessons from the Trial of Charles Taylor,” analyzes the practice and impact of Taylor’s trial by the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. The report examines the conduct of the trial, including issues related to efficiency, fairness, and witnesses and sources. It also examines the court’s efforts to make its proceedings accessible to communities most affected by the crimes, and perceptions and initial impact of the trial in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

“Taylor’s trial shows that credible prosecutions of the highest-level suspects for the gravest crimes are achievable,” said Annie Gell, international justice fellow at Human Rights Watch and the author of the report. “It was a long road and there was room for improvement, yet the proceedings were relatively well-managed, more than 100 witnesses testified, and expert defence counsel strengthened the proceedings.”

The report is based on research in Sierra Leone, Liberia, The Hague, London, and New York from September 2011 to June 2012.

The Taylor trial took place against a backdrop of criticism and concern over the feasibility of trying national leaders before international or hybrid war crimes courts following the 2002-2006 trial of former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. That trial was notable for its sometimes-chaotic atmosphere and Milosevic’s death before a judgment was issued.

The Taylor trial largely avoided major disruptions that could have marred the proceedings, Human Rights Watch said. Taylor’s decision to be represented by counsel appears to have contributed to the generally respectful and organized tenor of the courtroom.

Human Rights Watch urged tribunals handling such trials in the future to take measures to enhance trial management. Notably, the judges in Taylor’s trial adopted practices that sought to improve efficiency but sometimes contributed to delays, such as the ambitious courtroom calendar and inflexibility on parties meeting some deadlines. Other practices – such as the Trial Chamber’s non-interventionist approach to witness testimony and the admission of evidence of the underlying crimes – lengthened the proceedings.

More active court efforts to address defence concerns prior to the trial’s start could have encouraged smoother proceedings and improved fairness, Human Rights Watch said. Increased transparency and stronger guidelines for the prosecution’s provision of funds to potential witnesses and sources during its investigation could also have been helpful.

Trials like Taylor's are significant beyond the events in the courtroom, Human Rights Watch said. One crucial objective is to convey a sense of accountability to communities most affected by the crimes so that justice has local resonance and becomes meaningful.

"The court's dynamic outreach activities brought the trial to local communities in Sierra Leone and Liberia and helped to explain the proceedings," Gell said. "Trial impact is hard to judge but Sierra Leoneans and Liberians expressed greater expectations for justice and interest in promoting the rule of law in their countries."

Increased expectations for justice have also resulted in some frustration, though, over the absence of wider accountability in Sierra Leone and Liberia, Human Rights Watch said. A domestic amnesty for crimes committed during Sierra Leone's conflict remains in effect and Liberia has yet to investigate and prosecute serious crimes committed during its armed conflict.

"Domestic efforts to investigate serious crimes committed in Sierra Leone and Liberia beyond the Special Court's mandate are essential for more complete justice," Gell said. "The Sierra Leonean and Liberian governments should take concrete steps to pursue justice for serious crimes committed in their countries."

## **Background**

Taylor was sworn in as president of Liberia on August 2, 1997, after leading an eight-year insurgency against the Liberian government. Taylor's presidency, which lasted until 2003, was characterized by widespread human rights abuses in Liberia. Taylor's forces also participated in armed conflicts and cross-border raids in neighbouring Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire, where they committed numerous abuses.

On March 7, 2003, the Special Court for Sierra Leone indicted Taylor under seal for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law during Sierra Leone's armed conflict.

Taylor's repression in Liberia fuelled a rebellion to unseat him. Following rebel incursions into Monrovia, the Liberian capital, and the unsealing of Taylor's indictment by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Taylor stepped down as president, in August 2003. He was offered safe haven in Nigeria, where he stayed until his surrender to the Special Court.

Taylor was transferred to the custody of the Special Court on March 29, 2006. Because of concerns over regional stability in West Africa, the trial was moved from Freetown, the Sierra Leonean capital, to the Netherlands. The trial began on June 4, 2007, but was adjourned the same day when Taylor dismissed his legal team. New counsel was assigned the following month and proceedings resumed in January 2008. The trial phase officially closed on March 11, 2011.

On April 26, 2012, Taylor became the first former head of state since the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders after World War II to face a verdict before an international or hybrid international-national court on charges of serious crimes committed in violation of international law.

Taylor was found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt on all 11 counts of the indictment on the theory that he aided and abetted the commission of the crimes and was therefore individually criminally responsible for them. He was also found guilty of planning attacks on the diamond-rich Kono district in eastern Sierra Leone and the town of Makeni, the economic centre of northern Sierra Leone, in late 1998, and an attack on Freetown in early 1999, during which war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed.

On May 18, the court released its full written judgment, totalling over 2,500 pages. On May 30, Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in prison. Both prosecution and defence indicated they plan to appeal. Given

the judgment's length and the complexity of the case, the court estimates the appeals process will take at least 15 months, with an appeal judgment expected no earlier than September 2013.

“Even a ‘Big Man’ Must Face Justice” is available at:

<http://hrw.org/reports/2012/07/26/even-big-man-must-face-justice-0>

For a questions and answers document on the Charles Taylor trial and judgment, please visit:

<http://www.hrw.org/node/106451>

To view a special webpage on the Charles Taylor trial, please visit:

<http://www.hrw.org/topic/international-justice/charles-taylor>

To read a chronology of the Charles Taylor case, please visit:

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/11/prosecutor-v-charles-ghankay-taylor-chronology-case-special-court-sierra-leone>

For more Human Rights Watch reporting about the armed conflict in Sierra Leone, please visit:

<http://www.hrw.org/node/106424>

For more Human Rights Watch reporting about the armed conflict in Liberia, please visit:

<http://www.hrw.org/node/106425>

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New Europe Online

Thursday, 26 July 2012

<http://www.neurope.eu/article/charles-taylor-trial-largely-well-run>

### Charles Taylor trial 'largely well run'



AFP PHOTO - ANP - POOL / EVERT-JAN DANIELS Netherlands out

The trial of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, for crimes against humanity and war crimes in Sierra Leone was a “largely well-run” procedure, according to a new report by Human Rights Watch.

However, the report, *Even a ‘Big Man’ Must Face Justice: Lessons from the Trial of Charles Taylor*, identifies areas in which high-level trials of this sort can be improved.

The report examines the conduct of the trial, as well as efforts by the court to make its proceedings accessible to those affected by the crimes and an initial assessment of the impact of the trial in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The report is based on research in Sierra Leone, Liberia, The Hague, London, and New York from September 2011 to June 2012.

Charles Taylor was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the Hague in March 2003. On 30 May this year, he was sentenced to 50 years in prison.

“Taylor’s trial shows that credible prosecutions of the highest-level suspects for the gravest crimes are achievable,” report author Annie Gell said. “It was a long road and there was room for improvement, yet the proceedings were relatively well-managed, more than 100 witnesses testified, and expert defence counsel strengthened the proceedings.”

According to Human Rights Watch, the trial “largely avoided major disruptions that could have marred the proceedings” and “Taylor’s decision to be represented by counsel appears to have contributed to the generally respectful and organized tenor of the courtroom”.

Trials like Taylor's are significant beyond the events in the courtroom, Human Rights Watch said. One crucial objective is to convey a sense of accountability to communities most affected by the crimes so that justice has local resonance and becomes meaningful.

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## International Federation for Human Rights

Wednesday, 25 July 2012

Press Release

### **After World Court Ruling, Plan to Try Chad's Ex-Dictator in Senegal With African Judges**

Senegal's agreement on July 24, 2012, to establish a special court to try the former dictator of Chad, Hissène Habré, if swiftly implemented, could mark a turning point in the long campaign to bring him to justice, a coalition of human rights groups said today.

Habré is accused of thousands of political killings and systematic torture when he ruled Chad, from 1982 to 1990. Habré has been living in exile in Senegal for more than 21 years but has yet to face justice there. On July 20, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Senegal must prosecute Habré "without further delay" if it does not extradite him.

"After so many years of effort and so many disappointments, this agreement could finally give Hissène Habré's victims their day in court," said Reed Brody, counsel for Human Rights Watch, who has worked with the victims for 13 years. "The political will seems to be there in Senegal, and the World Court decision means there can be no turning back, but we are not there yet. Senegal should begin proceedings quickly, before more survivors die."

After four days of talks in Dakar, between July 20 and 24, Senegal agreed to an African Union (AU) plan to try Habré before a special court in the Senegalese justice system with African judges appointed by the AU presiding over his trial. Senegal's president, Macky Sall, has said he wants proceedings against Habré to begin by the end of the year, and the parties agreed to a road map that would have the court operational by year's end.

The International Committee for the Fair Trial of Hissène Habré - which comprises the Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (ATPDH), the Association of Victims of Crimes of the Regime of Hissène Habré (AVCRHH), the African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO), Human Rights Watch, and the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), among others - said that Senegal's decision, after the World Court ruling, was another important victory for Habré's victims.

"Senegal made history in 1999 as the first country to join the International Criminal Court, and it could make history again by being the first country to prosecute the human rights crimes of a foreign leader," said Alioune Tine, president of the Dakar-based RADDHO. "The Senegalese government is demonstrating its resolve to fight impunity at the highest levels."

The new agreement calls for "Extraordinary African Chambers" to be created inside the existing Senegalese court structure in Dakar. The chambers' mandate will be to prosecute the person or persons most responsible for atrocity crimes committed in Chad between 1982 and 1990. The chambers will have sections to handle investigations, trials, and appeals, and will consist of Senegalese and other African judges.

The coalition - which has been pressing for Habré's extradition to Belgium as the fastest way to achieve justice - called on Senegal to set up the new court swiftly and start proceedings against Habré as soon as possible. Senegal still needs parliamentary approval for the plan and has said it will seek international funding for the court.

The coalition called for the establishment of a strong management committee - comprised of Senegal, the AU, and donor countries - to ensure sound financial management of the court's budget, to supervise

training of judicial staff and to oversee outreach to the Chadian public, and to provide technical assistance where necessary.

The coalition also said Senegal should move quickly to incorporate the results of Belgian and Chadian investigations into Habré's crimes instead of starting from scratch.

A Belgian judge and his team spent nearly four years investigating Habré's crimes before indicting him on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and torture in 2005, leading Belgium to request his extradition from Senegal. A 1992 National Truth Commission in Chad accused Habré's government of systemic torture and up to 40,000 political assassinations.

The draft statute for the new court also allows Senegalese prosecutors to go after "the most serious" of Habré's crimes rather than charging him with all the acts of which he is accused. The measure is aimed at ensuring that the trial is manageable and does not drag on for years.

"If Senegal is committed to providing justice to the victims, it should complete the investigations and bring Habré to a fair trial as quickly as possible," said Jacqueline Moudeïna, lawyer for Habré's victims and coordinator of the International Committee. "Senegal should also ensure that Habré's victims can participate fully in his trial and should take steps to make the trial meaningful to people back in Chad."

The draft statute allows victims to participate as civil parties in the trial. It also provides for trial proceedings to be recorded for broadcast in Chad and for public access to the trial by journalists and non-governmental organizations.

The World Court's landmark decision on July 20 found that Senegal had violated its legal obligations under the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It ordered Senegal to bring Habré to justice "without further delay" either by prosecuting him in Senegal or extraditing him to Belgium. In June, United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged the Senegalese government to take "concrete steps" to prosecute Habré in Senegal or extradite him to Belgium.

"In less than four months, Macky Sall's government has made progress on a case that has lingered for years," said Souhayr Belhassen, president of the FIDH. "With this agreement and recent public statements by Sall and other high-ranking officials, we trust that the government will take steps to maintain this momentum and bring Habré to justice swiftly."

## **Background**

Habré was deposed in 1990 by President Idriss Déby Itno and fled to Senegal. His one-party rule was marked by widespread atrocities, including waves of ethnic cleansing. Files of Habré's political police, the Direction de la Documentation et de la Sécurité (DDS), which were discovered by Human Rights Watch in 2001, reveal the names of 1,208 people who were killed or died in detention and 12,321 victims of human rights violations.

Habré was first indicted in Senegal in 2000, but the country's courts said that he could not be tried there. His victims then filed charges in Belgium and in September 2005, after four years of investigation, a Belgian judge indicted Habré and Belgium requested his extradition. Senegal then turned to the AU, which called on Senegal to prosecute Habré "on behalf of Africa" in July 2006. President Abdoulaye Wade accepted the AU mandate and Senegal amended its law to give the country's courts extraterritorial jurisdiction over international crimes. However, years of wrangling over the trial budget ensued until in November 2010, Senegal and donor countries finally agreed to a budget of €8.6 million (US\$11.4 million) for Habré's trial. Just days earlier, a ruling by the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS) complicated matters by requiring Habré to be tried before a "special ad hoc procedure of an international character."

In response to the ECOWAS court ruling, the AU proposed creating a special court within the Senegalese justice system, but President Wade rejected the plan. Senegal and the AU continued discussions and, in March 2011, agreed in principle to a new plan. In May 2011, however, Senegal withdrew from negotiations.

In July 2011, Senegal threatened to expel Habré to Chad but, days later, retracted its decision in the face of an international outcry. The Chadian government then announced its support for extraditing Habré to Belgium to face trial.

Since that time, Belgium has submitted two new extradition requests to Senegalese authorities, the latter of which remains pending.

Associated Press  
Wednesday, 25 July 2012

### **Senegal, AU Reach Deal on Trying Ex-Chad Dictator**

DAKAR, Senegal

Senegal and the African Union say they have reached a preliminary agreement on how to try a former Chadian dictator who is accused of ordering thousands of political opponents to be tortured or killed.

The move comes a week after the International Court of Justice ordered Senegal to try Hissene Habre or extradite him.

Senegalese Justice ministry official Amadou Baal said Wednesday an African magistrate will preside over the special court and will be assisted by two Senegalese judges. The agreement reached Tuesday after four days of talks still needs final approval.

The Senegalese government has said it intends to start proceedings against Habre before the end of the year.

Habre ruled the Central African nation from 1982-1990 and sought exile in Senegal after being ousted from power.