

**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:

Thursday, 23 August 2012

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

Local NewsCourt Gives Taylor Deadline / *The Exclusive*

Page 3

International NewsHissene Habre: Senegal and AU Agree on Special Tribunal / *BBC*

Pages 4-5

Senegal: New Court to Try Chad Ex-Dictator in Senegal / *Human Rights Watch*

Pages 6-7

The Exclusive
Thursday, 23 August 2012

Sierra Leone: Court Gives Taylor Deadline

The UN backed special court for Sierra Leone has given ex-President Charles Taylor October 1, 2012 as the deadline to file his submission months after his lawyers filed a notice of appeal. Similar deadline has been awarded the prosecution to file its returns.

Mr. Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in prison early this year for aiding and abetting the Sierra Leone's civil war. His lawyers have since filed a notice of appeal and have twice requested an extension of time to complete preparation. Prosecution has also requested additional but not in the same number as the defense has requested.

The Court on Monday August 21 granted both the defense and prosecution an additional 21-day extension to file their submissions after an earlier request for 41 days were granted. Both parties have been granted extensions in the amount of 108 days, thereby allowing them 162 days for the filing of all appeal submissions.

In its ruling, the Special Court Appeal Judges indicated that they considered the defense request for additional time to that already granted as "necessary to prevent injustice," suggesting it (defense) will not be able to complete preparation of its Appellant's Submission by September 10, 2012.

The court agrees that the defense admission that the earlier extensions

granted were not enough to complete preparations to file its submission "goes to the fair trial rights of the Appellant, who is entitled to competent assistance of counsel in the preparation of his appeal."

The requests the court said were in line with its rules but stressed that the deadline for filing of the submissions are adjusted to reflect the 21 day extension.

BBC

Thursday, 23 August 2012

Hissene Habre: Senegal and AU agree on special tribunal



Chad's ex-dictator Hissene Habre leaves Dakar's courthouse escorted by prison guards 25 November 2005 Hissene Habre has lived in exile in Senegal for more than 20 years

Senegal and the African Union have signed an agreement to set up a special tribunal to try Chad's former leader Hissene Habre.

The 69 year old has been under house arrest since 2005 in Senegal, where he fled after being deposed.

He denies charges of killing and torturing tens of thousands of his opponents.

The charges date from 1982, when Mr Habre came to power in a coup, until he was ousted in 1990.

"Through the agreement, we are setting the procedure by which the trial should take place," said Senegal's Justice Minister Aminata Toure after signing the agreement with African Union representative Robert Dossou in the capital, Dakar.

The deal comes a month after the United Nations highest court, the International Court of Justice, passed a binding ruling that Senegal must begin proceedings to try Mr Habre "without further delay... if it does not extradite him".

Senegal has so far refused four extradition requests.

President Macky Sall, who came to power in March, had indicated that he would be willing to prosecute Mr Habre in a special tribunal.

Alioune Tine, president of the Dakar-based African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights, said Senegal had moved "one step close to justice".

"We're counting on Senegal and the African Union to move quickly now and to begin Habre's trial before even more survivors die," he said, in a statement released by Human Rights Watch.

'Policy of terror'

Dubbed "Africa's Pinochet", Mr Habre was first indicted in Senegal in 2000 - but the country's courts ruled at the time that he could not be tried there.

His alleged victims then filed complaints under Belgium's universal jurisdiction law, which allows the country's judges to prosecute human rights offences committed anywhere in the world.

Who is Hissene Habre?

Born in 1942 to ethnic Toubou herders in northern Chad

Given scholarship to study political science in France

First came to the world's attention in 1974 when his FAN rebels captured three European hostages to ransom for money and arms

Seized power in 1982 allegedly with the help of the CIA and ousted by current President Idriss Deby in 1990

Accused of systematically persecuting groups he distrusted

A former swimming pool was used as an underground prison where survivors say they were subjected to electric shocks, near-asphyxia and "supplice des baguettes", when their heads were squeezed between sticks

Profile: Chad's Hissene Habre

In 2005, he was charged by Belgium with crimes against humanity and torture.

There have been years of wrangling in Senegal over what to do about Mr Habre.

The government of former President Abdoulaye Wade changed its position on whether to try him several times - at one stage demanding international funding for a trial.

Last year, it unexpectedly announced that it would repatriate Mr Habre to Chad, where a court in 2008 sentenced him to death in absentia for planning to overthrow the government.

This plan was stopped following a plea from the UN, which feared he could be tortured on his return.

Mr Habre and his wife have kept a low profile in Dakar where he has lived in relative freedom, guarded by two security agents. He has occasionally been seen at a mosque for Friday prayers.

A 1992 Truth Commission in Chad accused Mr Habre of being responsible for widespread torture and the death of 40,000 people during his eight-year rule.

He was accused of carrying out a deliberate policy of terror to discourage any opposition.

Survivors of torture say that, among other things, they were subjected to electric shocks, near-asphyxia and "supplice des baguettes", when their heads were squeezed between sticks.

Human Rights Watch

Wednesday, 22 August 2012

Press Release

Senegal: New Court to Try Chad Ex-Dictator in Senegal

Donors Should Support Plan to Try Hissène Habré

(Brussels, August 23, 2012) – The agreement signed between Senegal and the African Union (AU) on August 22, 2012, to establish a special court to try the former dictator of Chad, Hissène Habré, is an important step 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.

“We are one step closer to justice today,” said Alioune Tine, president of the Dakar-based African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO). “We’re counting on Senegal and the African Union to move quickly now and to begin Habré’s trial before even more survivors die.”

The International Committee for the Fair Trial of Hissène Habré said that international donors should agree to fund the new court to ensure plans move forward swiftly.

The International Committee includes the RADDHO, 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), Human Rights Watch, the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), the Senegalese League for Human Rights, and Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l’Homme, among others.

Negotiations in July between the African Union and Senegal resulted in a plan to try Habré before a special court in the Senegalese justice system with African judges appointed by the AU presiding over his trial and any appeal. The August 22 agreement commits the parties to the plan and to a timetable that would have the court operational by the end of the year.

The new agreement calls for “Extraordinary African Chambers” to be created inside the existing Senegalese court structure in Dakar. The chambers will have sections to handle investigations, trials, and appeals. The trial court and the appeals court will each consist of two Senegalese judges and a president from another African country.

The chambers’ mandate will be to prosecute the person or persons most responsible for international crimes committed in Chad between 1982 and 1990, including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and torture. It is expected, however, that only Habré will be tried before the court.

To ensure that trials are efficient and do not drag on for years, prosecutors may pursue “the most serious” of Habré’s crimes, rather than charging him with all the acts of which he is accused. Prosecutors may also introduce as evidence the results of prior Belgian and Chadian investigations into Habré’s alleged crimes.

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 coalition called for the establishment of a strong management committee – consisting of Senegal, the AU, and donor countries – to ensure sound financial management of the court’s budget, supervise training of judicial staff, and oversee outreach to the Chadian public.

“It is fundamental to place the victims at the heart of the process and the court’s statute goes to great lengths to ensure that Habré’s trial is meaningful to them,” said Dobian Assingar of the FIDH, and honorary president of the Chadian League for Human Rights. “The new court could also set a significant precedent for the broader fight against impunity in Africa.”

Victims will be permitted to participate in proceedings as civil parties, represented by legal counsel, and to seek reparations from the court or from a voluntary victims’ fund. Reparations will be available even in cases in which victims do not participate in Habré’s trial. The court’s statute provides for trial proceedings to be recorded for broadcast in Chad and for public access to the trial by journalists and non-governmental organizations.

In November 2010, after years of wrangling, Senegal and donor countries had agreed to a budget of €8.6 million (US\$11.4 million) for Habré’s trial in Senegal. However, in May 2011, Senegal walked out of negotiations with the AU over the planning of the trial. Since nearly two years have elapsed since the donors’ initial pledges of funding, Senegal must seek new funding commitments and has indicated that it will do so rapidly. Senegal’s justice minister, Aminata Touré, has said that, unlike the previous government, Senegal will not delay the start of proceedings until full funding has been obtained.

The commitments made in 2010 were by: Chad (2 billion CFA francs or US\$3,743,000), the European Union (€2 million), Belgium (€1 million), the Netherlands (€1 million), the African Union (US\$1 million), Germany (€500,000), France (€300,000), and Luxembourg (€100,000).

During US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s trip to Senegal on August 1, she pledged “to help in every way” with Habré’s prosecution.

“Over the years, the international community has been crucial in pressing Senegal to ensure that Habré would face justice,” said Reed Brody, counsel for Human Rights Watch. “Given the potentially groundbreaking nature of this trial, and Senegal’s rapid advances, we hope that donors will help finance the new court.”