

**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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International News

International Justice: Sierra Leone and Cambodia / <i>UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office</i>	Page 3
Govt Fails to Freeze Taylor's Assets / <i>The News</i>	Page 4
Year in review: African Warlords Face The Courts / <i>World News Australia</i>	Pages 5-8

UK Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Friday, 14 December 2012

International Justice: Sierra Leone and Cambodia

William Hague (Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs; Richmond (Yorks), Conservative) :I can announce that in order to strengthen international justice and help secure accountability for some of the most horrific crimes against humanity in the last 50 years, the UK will make a voluntary contribution of £1 million to the Special Court for Sierra Leone and a voluntary contribution of £600,000 to the international component of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia.

The Government's contribution will help ensure the Special Court for Sierra Leone is able to complete its work, and leave a lasting legacy for the people of Sierra Leone. On 30 May, the court sentenced Charles Taylor, a former President of Liberia, to 50 years in jail for aiding and abetting war crimes. Taylor is the first former Head of State to be convicted by an international tribunal and the court is currently hearing his appeal.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia is delivering long-awaited justice for millions of Cambodians through the trials of the most senior and responsible surviving members of the Pol Pot regime. The scale of the crimes committed and the number of victims makes it one of the most significant tribunals of its kind since Nuremberg. The Government's contribution will help to prevent the collapse of the court which has faced a significant shortfall in funding.

International justice is central to foreign policy. It is essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation. Through the International Criminal Court, and the separate international tribunals, we are working to make clear that those responsible for the worst crimes will be held to account and that political leaders will not enjoy impunity. Our support to these institutions is an important element in our strategy to reduce conflict, promote stability and strengthen the rules-based international system. In order to give Parliament a full accounting of this work we will, from this point forward, also provide an annual statement at the start of the financial year detailing our progress on this important issue.

The News (Monrovia)

Tuesday, 18 December 2012

Liberia: Govt Fails to Freeze Taylor's Assets

The Security Council has extended the sanctions imposed on Liberia in connection with the country's civil war as well as the panel of experts tasked with monitoring compliance with the measures.

In a unanimously adopted resolution, the Council noted "with serious concern" the lack of progress in implementing the financial measures imposed by a 2004 resolution demanding that all assets of former president Charles Taylor, family members and associates be frozen to prevent them from obstructing the restoration of peace in Liberia and the region.

The Council demanded that the Liberian Government "make all necessary efforts to fulfill its obligations."

The 15-member body also renewed the measures on travel and arms, and the mandate of the panel of experts, for another 12 months.

The panel was first appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in July 2007 to renew investigations on whether the sanctions were being enforced in the light of allegations that Mr. Taylor still had access to considerable wealth in the country.

Mr. Taylor was sentenced in May by the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) to 50 years in prison for planning and for aiding and abetting crimes committed by Sierra Leonean rebel forces during that country's decade-long civil war.

In the resolution, the Council called on all States and the Liberian Government to cooperate fully with the panel, which is tasked with, among other things, conducting two follow-up assessment missions to Liberia and neighboring States to investigate and compile a mid-term and a final report on the implementation, and any violations, of the sanctions.

It also called on the Liberian Government to complete implementation of the recommendations of the 2009 review team for the Kimberley Process, a framework for certifying diamonds as not part of the illicit trade that could fuel conflict, and to improve transparent governance of all natural resources.

World News Australia

Monday, 17 December 2012

Year in review: African warlords face the courts

Liberia's former president Charles Taylor became the first head of state to be convicted by an international court since the Nazi trials at Nuremberg following the Second World War. (AAP)

High profile African leaders and rebel leaders were brought to justice in 2012, facing charges such as aiding and abetting war crimes and recruiting child soldiers. Santilla Chingaipe reports.

Listen: African strongmen face the courts

Crimes against humanity, aiding and abetting war crimes, recruiting child soldiers are just some of the crimes former and sitting African leaders and rebel leaders were found guilty or accused of in 2012.

Santilla Chingaipe looks back at the year that was in some high profile African legal cases.

The year began with the International Criminal Court ruling that two presidential candidates in Kenya must stand trial over crimes against humanity following post-election violence in 2007.

The ICC said Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta and former minister William Ruto will both face charge.

They are among four prominent Kenyans - all of whom deny the accusations - who the ICC said will stand trial.

But as 2012 drew to a close, Mr Kenyatta and Mr Ruto were still free men, and planning to run for the Kenya's presidency at the 2013 presidential and parliamentary polls.

Liberia's former president Charles Taylor became the first head of state to be convicted by an international court since the Nazi trials at Nuremberg following the Second World War.

The 64-year-old was sentenced to 50 years in prison for war crimes in the neighbouring African nation of Sierra Leone in the 1990s.

The sentence came after five years of hearings at the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague.

Taylor was charged with 11 counts of aiding and abetting war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

He showed no emotion as Presiding Judge Richard Lussick delivered the guilty verdicts.

"Count one, acts of terrorism, a violation of article three common to the Geneva conventions, and of additional protocol to, pursuant to article 3D of the statute. Count two, murder. A crime against humanity, pursuant of article 2A of the statute. Count three, violence to life, health and physical or mental well being of persons, in particular, murder. A violation of article 3 common to the Geneva conventions."

Taylor was found guilty of training, financing and helping Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front rebels.

The rebels entered Sierra Leone from Liberia in 1991 and waged a terror campaign in the civil war that claimed an estimated 120-thousand lives over a decade.

Prosecutors alleged that the rebels paid Taylor for his support with illegally mined, so-called blood diamonds.

Taylor was indicted in 2003, before he was arrested in Nigeria in 2006.

During the trial, he pleaded not guilty, denying all the allegations.

"I, Charles Ghankay Taylor, never, ever, at any time, knowingly assist Foday Sankoh (leader of Sierra Leone rebel militia) in the invasion of Sierra Leone."

The trial began in 2007 and saw some 94 witnesses take the stand for the prosecution and 21 for the defence before wrapping up in March 2011.

British model Naomi Campbell was one witness.

She told the court she received a gift of diamonds from Taylor at a charity dinner hosted by then South African President Nelson Mandela in 1997.

"I had a knock on my door and I opened my door and two men were there and gave me a pouch and said 'a gift for you'."

While the court convicted Taylor of aiding and abetting atrocities by rebels, they cleared him of direct command responsibility.

The special court of Sierra Leone had already convicted eight Sierra Leoneans of war crimes and jailed them for between 15 and 52 years following trials in Freetown.

The year also saw Senegal and the African Union sign an agreement to create a special tribunal to try former Chadian leader Hissene Habre.

Mr Habre has been living in Senegal since fleeing his country in 1990 after being ousted.

The special tribunal will be set up in Dakar to judge him for war crimes 22 years after he left power.

A 1992 truth commission report in Chad said that during his time in power, he presided over up to 40-thousand political murders and widespread torture.

Rights groups called on the Senegalese government to act swiftly in trying the former Chad president.

Spokesman of the Dakar-based African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights Alioune Tine says the people of Chad are a step closer to getting justice.

"It's very good information (news) for all the victims of Hissene Habre. There is hope. What we want now is to begin the trial very quickly. To build these mechanisms very very quickly because there is a long time that victims have been waiting for this Hissene Habre trial."

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, former Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga was sentenced by the International Criminal Court to 14 years in prison for enlisting child soldiers in his rebel army.

The 51-year-old was convicted of recruiting children for his rebel group, the Union of Congolese Patriots, during fighting in 2002 and 2003 in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Lubanga also made history by being the first person to be convicted by the ICC since it was launched a decade ago.

Presiding judge Adrian Fulford delivered the verdict.

"The chamber reached its decision unanimously. The chamber concludes, that the prosecution has proved beyond doubt that Mr Thomas Lubanga Dyilo is guilty of the crimes of conscripting and enlisting children under the age of 15 years into the FPLC (militia group) and using them to participate in hostilities from early September 2002 to the 13th of August 2003."

Nick Grono is from the non-profit organisation, the International Crisis Group, which researches conflicts.

He said Lubanga was convicted on several charges.

"Lubanga was a militia leader in the eastern Congo in the very nasty war that was going on there through and including the early 2000s and he was accused of three war crimes of recruiting, conscripting and using child soldiers and the court found that he committed those crimes, used child soldiers, and including using them as his bodyguards and these are the kind of crimes that we see in other conflicts in Africa, in particular the Lord's resistance Army and Joseph Kony for instance and other conflicts that are ongoing elsewhere in Africa."

Lubanga had pleaded not guilty, saying he was only a politician and was not involved in violence.

A United Nations report in October accused Rwanda's defense minister of commanding a rebellion in eastern DRC that is being armed by Rwanda and Uganda.

The confidential report, leaked to Reuters news agency, said the minister also sent troops to aid the insurgency in a deadly attack on UN peacekeepers.

The UN Security Council's Group of Experts say Rwanda and Uganda, despite their denials, continue to support M-23 rebels in their six-month fight against Congolese government troops.

M-23 is a group of army mutineers made up of Tutsi ex-rebels from the Rwanda-backed National Congress for the Defence of the People.

It is headed by Bosco Ntaganda who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes.

They were integrated into the regular army in 2009 as part of a peace deal on March 23, 2009 for which they are named.

But they mutinied in April, demanding better pay and a full implementation of the March 23rd peace deal.

The UN said M-23 has expanded territory under its control, stepped up recruitment of child soldiers and summarily executed prisoners.

Speaking to the BBC, Uganda's Foreign Minister Henry Okello-Oryem dismissed the report as rubbish.

"I can only say that this is mischief by those who do not intend for success in the progress being made. But we're not going to accept our name of the government of Uganda, the people of Uganda to be tarnished in an unjustified and unproven ground."

Rwanda's President Paul Kagame also told the BBC his government was not involved in the conflict.

"The main problem in this situation is a mix of ignorance and arrogance, people not listening. It's just that, we don't know what they're about or what they want. We are not even involved at all and it wouldn't make sense because for us our relationship with the Congo before this thing happened was actually very good and we were working together to eliminate the problem that has existed between the two countries."

But perhaps the most prominent of Africa's accused war criminals this year was Joseph Kony.

He became the focus of an internet campaign by a United States Charitable group to bring him to justice.

The indicted war criminal is head of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army rebels, which is known for atrocities including war crimes, abducting children to act as soldiers, sexual slavery and rape.

The 'KONY2012' campaign was launched, Invisible Children, with a 30-minute video which has been viewed by more than 100 million people since it was posted online.

This is an extract from the clip:

"For 26 years, Kony has been kidnapping children into his rebel group the LRA. Turning the girls into sex slaves and the boys into child soldiers. He makes them mutilate people's faces and he forces them to kill their own parents. And this is not just a few children, it's been over 30-thousand of them."

Despite the viral internet campaign to stop Joseph Kony, the accused warlord has yet to be captured.

Meanwhile, the first woman and African to head International Criminal Court was also appointed this year.

Gambia's Fatou Bensouda vowed to work for justice for Africans.

She said her list of priorities as chief prosecutor include the arrest of Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir who is wanted by the ICC for war crimes and the trial of Ivory Coast's ousted leader Laurent Gbagbo who is waiting the commencement of his trial in the Hague.