

**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:

Tuesday, 19 February 2013

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

Local News

New Group of Students at Sierra Leone Law School / *The Torchlight* Page 3

International News

I.Coast's Gbagbo Before International Criminal Court / *Agence France Presse* Pages 4-5

Syria War Criminals Should Face International Criminal Court / *Reuters* Pages 6-7

Jackson Center CEO Speaks In Warren On RHJ's Birthday / *The Post Journal* Page 8-9

Tanzania: ICC to Establish Regional Chapter in Arusha City / *Tanzania Daily News* Page 10

Freetown: New Group of Students at Sierra Leone Law School



The Sierra Leone Law School now housed at the Special Court (photo) in the West of the capital Freetown is currently hosting a new batch of students who are preparing for the Bar Exam to join the crop of lawyers in Sierra Leone. Like in all academic or training institutions, the Students have felt the need to have an executive to run their association so as to articulate their preferences, priorities, interests and serve as a liaison between the administration and they the students. The present set of students comprises those from the West African state of Cameroon and Sierra Leoneans who studied in the United States, Nigeria, UK and Fourah Bay College (FBC) University of Sierra Leone, the first college in the British colonial West Africa established in 1827.

The new executive that now leads the

Association known as the Sierra Leone Bar Students Association comprises Umar Sesay, a product of FBC as President, assisted by a female Vice President Pauline Oduwyer, a Sierra Leonean who studied in London. The scribe of the association is Randy Sallieu Bangura. He is assisted by a dynamic female Miss Fatmata Mansaray, a product of FBC. The Public relations will be handled by Almamy Mansaray commonly known as Rooney who is also a product of FBC. The positions of editor-in-chief and editor of the newsletter of the Law School have been conferred on Alpha Rashid Jalloh and Francis Gbaya respectively, both products of FBC. They are assisted by Ashutantan Tambe from Cameroon. The executive has resolved to host series of activities prior to the expiration of their term.

Agence France Presse

Tuesday, 19 February 2013

I.Coast's Gbagbo before International Criminal Court

Ivorian ex-president Laurent Gbagbo on Tuesday faces International Criminal Court judges who will decide whether there is enough evidence to try him for masterminding a bloody election standoff two years ago.

Presiding judge Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi is to open the hearings at the Hague-based court's headquarters at 14:30 pm (1330 GMT), with prosecutors expecting to launch their case later in the afternoon.

Gbagbo, 67, the first-ever former head of state to appear before the ICC, faces four counts of crimes against humanity including murder and rape for fomenting a wave of violence which swept the west African nation after he refused to concede defeat in November 2010 presidential polls.



Supporters of former president Laurent Gbagbo run away from police in Abidjan on February 16, 2013.

Four months of fighting followed, ravaging the world's largest cocoa producer and leaving some 3,000 people dead, according to the UN.

For just over a week, prosecutors and the defence will argue their cases before a three-judge bench, who will then decide if there are "substantial grounds to believe that Gbagbo committed the crimes" and should be charged.

The prosecution says Gbagbo spearheaded a plan to "stay in power by all means... through carefully planned, sustained and deadly attacks" against supporters of election winner and current Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara.

Between November 28, 2010 and May 8, 2011 Gbagbo's forces killed between 706 and 1,059 people and raped more than 35 women, prosecutors say.

In one instance, some 80 people were massacred when perceived Ouattara supporters were attacked in the northwestern Abidjan suburb of Yopougon a day after Gbagbo's arrest.

His supporters in turn have accused Ouattara's camp of practising "victor's justice" as many of the former president's backers are now behind bars -- including his wife Simone Gbagbo, who is also wanted for prosecution by the ICC -- while none of those close to the Ouattara regime has been arrested despite accusations of rights abuses.

Gbagbo, a former historian-turned-politician, was finally arrested on April 11, 2011, when Ouattara's forces with French and UN backing overran his heavily fortified compound in the southern economic capital after days of heavy fighting.

He was taken to the northern Ivorian town of Korhogo, where he spent almost eight months under house arrest before being transferred to the ICC's detention unit in November 2011.

During his first and only public appearance before ICC judges a few days later on December 5 that year, Gbagbo accused France of orchestrating his arrest, while his supporters at the time branded his incarceration a "political kidnapping." He has denied the charges against him.

Since then, the scheduled hearing to confirm the charges has twice been delayed -- once to give his lawyers more time to prepare and again to assess his health to see if he was fit to stand trial.

ICC judges ruled in November last year he could take part, but have instituted shorter court sessions and are allowing him, if need be, to appear via video link because of his health.

Tuesday's hearings are to last over a week, with Gbagbo expected to speak on the final day, February 28.

Reuters

Tuesday, 19 February 2013

Syria war criminals should face International Criminal Court : UN

Geneva: United Nations investigators said on Monday that Syrian leaders they had identified as suspected war criminals should face the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The investigators urged the UN Security Council to “act urgently to ensure accountability” for violations, including murder and torture, committed by both sides in an uprising and civil war that has killed about 70,000 people since March 2011.



Image for representation only. AP

“Now really it’s time... We have a permanent court, the International Criminal Court, who would be ready to take this case,” Carla del Ponte, a former ICC chief prosecutor who joined the UN team in September, told a news briefing in Geneva.

But because Syria is not party to the Rome Statute that established the ICC, the only way the court can investigate the situation is

if it receives a referral from the Security Council. Russia, Assad’s long-standing ally and a permanent veto-wielding member of the council, has opposed such a move.

“We cannot decide. But we pressure the international community to decide because it’s time to act,” del Ponte said.

Brazilian expert Paulo Pinheiro, who leads the UN inquiry set up in 2011, said: “We are in very close dialogue with all the five permanent members and with all the members of the Security Council, but we don’t have the key that will open the path to cooperation inside the Security Council.”

His team of some two dozen experts is tracing the chain of command in Syria to establish criminal responsibility and build a case for eventual prosecution.

“Of course we were able to identify high-level perpetrators,” del Ponte said, adding that these were people “in command responsibility... deciding, organising, planning and aiding and abetting the commission of crimes”.

She said it was urgent for the Hague-based war crimes tribunal to take up cases of “very high officials”, but did not identify them, in line with the inquiry’s practice.

“We have crimes committed against children, rape and sexual violence. We have grave concerns. That is also one reason why an international body of justice must act because it is terrible.”

Del Ponte, who tried former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia on war crimes charges, said the ICC prosecutor would need to deepen the investigation on Syria before an indictment could be prepared.

Karen Koning AbuZayd, an American member of the U.N. team, told Reuters it had information pointing to “people who have given instructions and are responsible for government policy, people who are in the leadership of the military, for example”.

The inquiry’s third roster of suspects, building on lists drawn up in the past year, remains secret. It will be entrusted to U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay upon expiry of its mandate at the end of March, the report said.

Pillay, a former ICC judge, said on Saturday Assad should be investigated for war crimes, and called for outside action on Syria, including possible military intervention.

Pinheiro said the investigators would not speak publicly about “numbers, names or levels” of suspects.

SEVEN MASSACRES IDENTIFIED

The investigators’ latest report, covering the six months to mid-January, was based on 445 interviews conducted abroad with victims and witnesses, as they have not been allowed into Syria.

“We identified seven massacres during the period, five on the government side, two on the armed opponents’ side. We need to enter the sites to be able to confirm elements of proof that we have,” del Ponte said.

The U.N. report said the ICC was the appropriate institution for the fight against impunity in Syria. “As an established, broadly supported structure, it could immediately initiate investigations against authors of serious crimes in Syria.”

Government forces have carried out shelling and air strikes across Syria including Aleppo, Damascus, Deraa, Homs and Idlib, the 131-page report said, citing corroborating satellite images.

“Government forces and affiliated militias have committed extra-judicial executions, breaching international human rights law. This conduct also constitutes the war crime of murder. Where murder was committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population, with knowledge of that attack, it is a crime against humanity,” the report said.

Those forces have targeted bakery queues and funeral processions to spread “terror among the civilian population”.

Rebels fighting to topple Assad have also committed war crimes including murder, torture, hostage-taking and using children under age 15 in hostilities, the U.N. report said.

“They continue to endanger the civilian population by positioning military objectives inside civilian areas” and rebel snipers had caused “considerable civilian casualties”, it said.

George Sabra, a vice president of the opposition Syrian National Coalition, asked about the UN report, told Reuters at a conference in Stockholm: “We condemn all kind of crimes, regardless who did it.

“We can’t ignore that some mistakes have been made and maybe still happen right now. But nobody also can ignore that the most criminal file is that of the regime.”

The Post Journal
 Sunday, 17 February 2013

Jackson Center CEO Speaks In Warren On RHJ's Birthday

By Josh Cotton

WARREN, Pa. - This past Wednesday would have been former U.S. Supreme Court Justice and Warren County native Robert H. Jackson's 121st birthday.

The only man to serve as U.S. Solicitor General, Attorney General and Supreme Court Justice, Jackson laid the foundation for the prosecution of international criminal law, establishing and prosecuting Nazi war criminals after World War II at Nuremberg.

To celebrate that legacy, current Jackson Center CEO James Johnson, who spent nine-and-a-half years prosecuting war criminals as the Chief of Prosecutions for the Special Court of Sierra Leone, spoke at the Warren County Courthouse about his experiences as a prosecutor of international criminal law.

James Johnson, former chief of prosecutions of the Special Court of Sierra Leone, and current Robert H. Jackson CEO, spoke on his experiences prosecuting international criminal law in Sierra Leone at the Warren County Courthouse on Wednesday evening. The lecture was in honor of the 121st birthday of Jackson, a Warren County native who served on the U.S. Supreme Court and tried Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg.



While the concept of the international tribunal originally designed by Jackson remains largely unchanged, several circumstances made prosecuting war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone particularly unique.

Photo by Josh Cotton

The court, which was the first international tribunal to convict and sentence a head of state, grew out of a conflict that was "particularly brutal," Johnson said. "In some ways, we saw some things coming out of Sierra Leone that you really hadn't seen before." Over 50,000 people were killed, child soldiers were utilized and many were victims of "systematic amputations" that would hinder quality of life permanently.

The mandate of the court, Johnson explained, was to "prosecute those who bore the greatest responsibility."

The focus was not on prosecuting all of those involved. Instead, he said, "We were set up to try the leaders." They could prosecute on four separate charges: crimes against humanity, war crimes, attacks on peacekeepers as well as the use of child soldiers.

Where Nuremberg sought to assign responsibility to who started what would ultimately become World War II, Johnson said that the Special Court was "now interested in how you fight the war. It doesn't matter if you were on the side of right or the aggressor. We cared about how you fought it and that is the way modern international tribunals are set up."

"I was responsible for those years for overseeing all of the trials," he said, explaining that the prosecutor's office brought indictments against 13 individuals, three of whom died before they could be tried. The other 10 were tried in three separate trials with a fourth trial specifically arranged for the prosecution of Charles Taylor, the Liberian head of state who allegedly guided the rebels in Sierra Leone.

The headline trial was that of Taylor, who was the sitting president when he was indicted and who was ultimately the first head of state convicted of crimes against humanity since Nuremberg. The first immediate problem for the prosecutor, Johnson explained, was arresting Taylor. When his indictment was unsealed, Taylor went into exile in Nigeria for three years before he was ultimately handed over to the Special Court.

One hundred witnesses 94 of whom were brought to the court testified against Taylor at his trial at The Hague, which started in 2007. He was convicted on all counts with which he had been charged and sentenced to a 50-year prison term which will likely be served in the United Kingdom once the appeal process, which is currently ongoing, concludes.

Contrasted with Jackson's work at Nuremberg, Johnson said, "Many of the cases at Nuremberg were paper cases. We didn't have a paper trail that we could establish," in Sierra Leone. "We would only prove our case through witness testimony."

Reflecting on his experiences, he said, "A lot of terrible things happened in Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leones are a wonderful people. There's a lot of life in the people of Sierra Leone. They are trying very hard to move forward."

On a more personal level, Johnson said, "It was an honor for me to do what I did The work was rewarding. You felt like you were making a difference."

He acknowledged, "You do feel contempt for (the defendants). You feel hatred for them, but you are there to do a job. That's why we were there to do a job the rule of law rules."

Tanzania Daily News

Monday, 18 February 2013

Tanzania: ICC to Establish Regional Chapter in Arusha City

By Marc Nkwame

Arusha — ARUSHA will soon host one of the African regional chapters of the International Criminal Court (ICC) currently operating from The Hague, in Holland.

The Regional Commissioner for Arusha, Mr Magessa Mulongo, revealed here that the Netherlands-based International Court has already been given a plot of land on which the proposed African Chapter of the ICC is expected to be built.

The entrance of ICC here will help reduce the impact of the imminent departure of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (UN-ICTR) which is in the process of closing shop here after operating in town since 1995.

The Regional Commissioner was speaking during an occasion to officially inaugurate a newly built, modern entertainment and shopping centre to be known as "World Garden" which stands along the Nelson Mandela Road, in the remote Moshono Ward of the city.

"Arusha anticipates hosting more international organizations in addition to the existing ones and these will bring a number of foreign personalities in the city, who may want places to unwind after work, in the evenings or during the weekends," said Mr Mulongo.

Already, Arusha hosts the African Court for Human and People's Rights, the East African Court of Justice (which is an auspex of the East African Community) and should The Hague establishes its seat here, it will become the third such international law presiding entity.

An official from The Hague was quoted recently commenting that the ICC cannot operate without support from Africa because 25 per cent of its staff comes from the continent while also five out of the court's 18 judges hail from Africa thus making the continent part and parcel of the ICC operations.