

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE  
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



School children and teachers from the Word of Faith Nursery and Preparatory School visited the Special Court today. For more photos, see today's *'Special Court Supplement'*.

**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, 25 April 2013

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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**International News**

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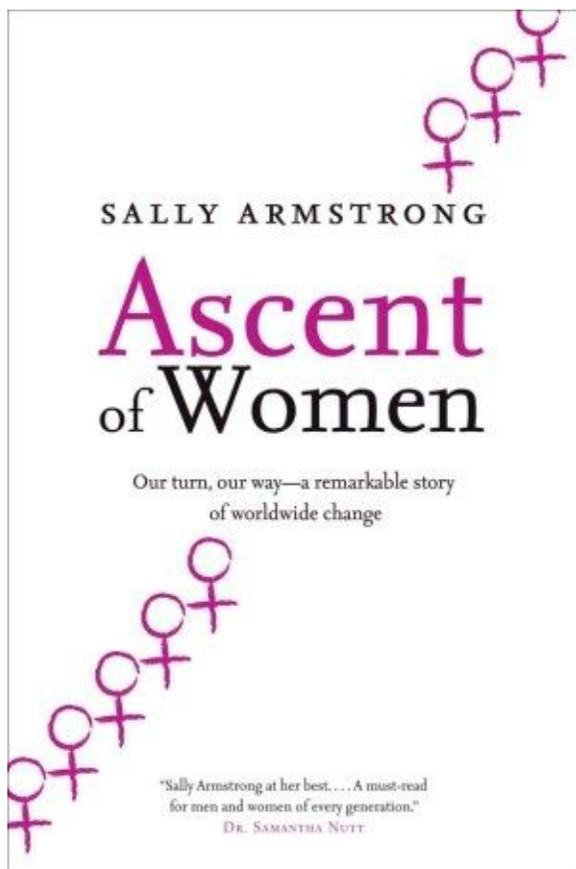
IFP

Saturday, 20 April 2013

<http://www.lfpress.com/2013/04/18/book-review-earth-is-shifting-for-women>

## Book review: Earth is shifting for women

By Nancy Schiefer, Special to QMI Agency



Well-known Canadian activist Sally Armstrong is an optimist. Despite the horrendous conditions still facing women worldwide, Armstrong feels the future will be brighter for half the world's population.

-SNIP-

In another chapter Armstrong describes the banding together of Christian and Muslim women in Liberia to refuse sex with their husbands, until a peace deal with Ghana was signed by the country's mentally disturbed dictator, **Charles Taylor**. Taylor not only complied, but left the country.

-SNIP-

## Frontpage Africa (Liberia)

Tuesday, 23 April 2013

### **Who Wants Verdier, Others Dead? Ex - Warlords Debunk TRC Chair's Threat Claims**

By Wade C.I. Williams

Monrovia- An associate of the former Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Cllr. Jerome Verdier has alarmed that former warlords indicted in the final report of the Commission have blacklisted the former Chairman of the Commission and other Commissioners and marked them for death.

In an email served the editor of FrontPageAfrica by McDonald Metzger, the former aide to Verdier outlined the threat to the lives of his former boss and other commissioners of the erstwhile TRC.

"Now we have been marked for death and our families too are in serious danger of losing their lives because of our work with the TRC," stated the email.

"It is a desperate situation of peril. The government of Liberia under the administration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has done nothing to allay the fears. The silence is acquiescence to the ploy to get for our death."

Documents sent to FrontPageAfrica reveals a letter dated May 21, 2012 and addressed to Cllr. Verdier in which several warlords and their surrogates allegedly gave the former Chairman of the TRC an ultimatum to denounce the TRC report or run for their lives along with their family members.

The letter emanating from senior executive officers and members of a group calling itself the Coalition of Former Liberian Combatants against the TRC War Crimes Court Indictment (CFCATWACC) noted that it was established in 2009 to seek vengeance against Verdier and others who listed them for prosecution for war crimes.

"We are former combatants of all the defunct warring factions that participated in the war with stake in the return of Liberia to democratic rule," stated the letter.

Continued the Communication: "We are former fighters from all ranks and files of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Independence National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), Liberia Peace Council (LPC), and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), and the Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU), Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (SATU), Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)."

The aide to Verdier who claimed to be his spokesman said as a result of the Chairman of the TRC, some Commissioners, Program and Inquiry staffs have fled Liberia for their lives in self-imposed exile and those who remain in the country fear that their daily lives are in danger.

"There are individuals out there who want to kill us to stake a point," stated the email, naming those that the former Chairman of the TRC and others think are after him and other commissioners.

"The notorious Prince Johnson, George Boley, Melvin Sobany, Siafa Norman, Benjamin Yeaten, George Dweh, Saah Gborlee, Alhaji Kromah, Sekou Damatee Konneh, Roland Duo, Sando Johnson, Thomas Nimley and others are still lurking in Liberia."

Verdier and his aide fears that the former warlords continue to have influence in Liberia among their followers.

"They still have their Chain of Command and foot soldiers. Their brutal and bloodletting deeds only remind us what they are capable of doing to us who are not protected," stated the aide.

"We want to at this time present our case of fear of death, murder and other wanton human rights tragedy. I worked with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) and served in the capacity as VIP Protection for the chairman Cllr. Jerome Verdier."

The aide said a lot has been going on since the TRC final report was produced and it was a strike to the hearts of those who bore the greatest responsibility for the abuse and deaths of thousands innocent lives when they were recommended for prosecution.

"In the truest sense the TRC recommended further prosecution in a war crimes court and bar them for holding public office. It was a brave stance, unprecedented in Liberia and now we have been made targets to be assassinated or brutally murdered," said the Aide.

### **Verdier is Crazy, PYJ Says**

One of those mentioned as being behind the plot to eliminate the former TRC chairman and his cohorts, Nimba County Senator and former warlord Price Y. Johnson said Cllr. Verdier must be out of his mind to suggest that he wants him dead.

"Jerome Verdier needs to go to a mental home. When he wrote that bogus report that was filled with nothing but incrimination without evidences- that report was thrown into the cabbage bin," said Senator Johnson.

Continued Johnson: "I knew from the onset that report would never go anywhere because you don't incriminate prominent people in this country without evidence."

Senator Johnson noted that the erstwhile TRC former chairman's decision to recommend the prosecution of him and many others was saddled in some sinister motive that Verdier needs to come to terms with. He said many people criticized the report locally and internationally and it did not get the endorsement of all of the serving commissioners.

"Our law says, the accuser must produce evidence against the accused and the report falls short of that; to the extent that some of the commissioners had to decline and wrote their dissenting opinions; to the extent that the American advisor to the TRC resigned," said Senator Johnson.

### **Bogus report**

The Nimba lawmaker told FrontPageAfrica in an interview that the report in itself was marred by inconsistencies and many of the recommendations were flawed.

"It was a bogus report. You take for example, a Krahn man who said he killed 20, 000 Liberians (of course they came from Nimba because we were under siege) with African sign- juju," he said.

" And the Verdier TRC did not ask him 'if you've got the power to kill 20, 000 with African sign, then how many did you kill with machine gun that you had' you didn't ask him that but you removed his name from the report."

Senator Johnson said the Verdier-led TRC left some of the key perpetrators of the conflict were out rightly left off the hook without any repercussions whatsoever but him and others who told the truth were blindly listed for prosecution.

"The report is bogus, it has no credibility, it violated the rights of the Liberian people who were accused," he said.

Continued Senator Johnson: "You've got my professor, Dr. Boima Fahnbulleh who invaded this country in 1985 and he said 'I invaded this country. There were loss of lives but it was intended to remove a diabolical dictatorship system. I've got no remorse.' You removed his name. Senator Johnson got there and he said 'yes I was there they cut Doe's ear' I admitted to what I did. He said yeas he talk truth you' all put his name there. "

### **False Alarm, PYJ Says - 'No one after Verdier**

Speaking in a mobile phone conversation with FPA, Senator Johnson noted that the former Commissioner was raising a false alarm to gain unwarranted attention. He said no one is after any former TRC commissioner as they have lost their relevance to the process of the TRC that no longer exists.

"Who is after him? His own evil is haunting him. Since Verdier left this country, I don't know which country he is in; I don't know where he lives," he said.

"Even John Stewart was seen many times on Randall street with slippers on his feet, begging, riding motorbike. I'm sorry to say this; begging for 20 Liberian dollars; they've all turned to be beggars now. Verdier must be getting crazy."

Senator Johnson said he is more occupied with ways of helping those affected by the way by his new efforts around the country where he has embarked at educational initiatives aimed at helping the young people who lost so much during the war.

" I'm not after Verdier who has mental problem right now," said Senator Johnson.

"I'm busy carrying on reconstruction in keeping with my desire and commitment to support the reparation process; that's what I believe in and not prosecution, so I'm doing my best building foundation, building institutions for the future generation of this country."

### **Verdier Looking for attention, Alhaji Kromah says**

Another former warlord, Professor Alhaji G. V. Kromah also speaking to FrontPageAfrica said that Cllr. Verdier wants some renewed international attention turned to him especially with the 2014 Senatorial race coming up.

"I think this thing is politically inspired. They know that the Senatorial election is coming, so they want to start raising artificial issues. Nobody running behind Verdier I don't know where he is and I couldn't care where he is," said Prof. Kromah.

"He tried on the Ellen Johnson side I don't know how far he went with that but I think he wants some kind of international attention. Who got time for Jerome? Is he the only one who was on the TRC?"

The University of Liberia's Mass Communication Professor laughing out loud during the mobile phone conversation said he was shocked that Cllr. Verdier would resort to such antics at this point in time when the TRC has lost relevance.

"Nobody has threatened anybody. He should not try to make people to make big headlines to sell their papers. Nobody has been indicted here; no court has been set up. I didn't even know that he was hiding. Was he the only one who signed?" said Prof. Kromah.

"Cllr. Pearl Brown Bull is here. Coleman is here; John Stewart and myself flew the other day on some flight and we were joking each other at the airport in Accra. Sheik Kafumba Konneh is here; all these people are here, why they can't feel threatened from us, only him."

### **Threats issued**

Despite the denial issued by these Senator Johnson and Prof. Kromah, Cllr. Verdier and his cohort are said to be in hiding even in exile as they fear for their lives. The former TRC Chairman is not taking the letter received for granted as it lays out clear cut directives for elimination.

"Remember our chain of command is still in place and we still command every war tactics of combat, attack, assassination as were done during the war. We know your locations and are tracking all of your movements, your hide outs and families' hide out and connections," states the letter addressed to Verdier and text highlighted in red. "We will stop at nothing but to have you all killed. We are capable of anything whether you are in Liberia, in the US, France, Europe or any part of the world."

# Foreign Policy

Thursday, 25 April 2013

## Is torture still a universal crime?

Posted By Joshua Keating



One of the many stories which understandably flew under the radar this week was the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the case of *Kiobel vs. Royal Dutch Petroleum*. The court ruled that the plaintiffs do not have the right to sue an oil company in U.S. courts for alleged complicity in human rights abuses overseas under an arcane 18th century law:

Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., writing for the majority, said a general presumption against the extraterritorial application of American law barred the suit.

“All the relevant conduct took place outside the United States,” he wrote.

He added that even some minimal contact with the United States would not be sufficient to overcome the presumption. “Even where the claims touch and concern the territory of the United States, they must do so with sufficient force to displace the presumption against extraterritorial application.”

He gave an example: “Corporations are often present in many countries, and it would reach too far to say mere corporate presence suffices.”

The case involved a joint subsidiary of the Royal Dutch Petroleum Company, based in the Netherlands, and the Shell Transport and Trading Company, based in England. The subsidiary, incorporated in Nigeria, was accused of aiding and abetting in atrocities by Nigerian military and police forces against Ogoni villagers.

After being granted asylum in the United States, several Nigerians sued the parent companies under the 1789 law, the Alien Tort Statute, which is brief and cryptic. It allows federal courts to hear “any civil action by an alien for a tort only, committed in violation of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States.”

The 1789 law was largely ignored until the 1980s, the New York Times reports, but since then has been applied in a number of human rights cases.

Erik Voeten sees the decision as part of a larger worldwide rolling back of the notion of universal jurisdiction for human rights cases:

Belgium repealed its universal jurisdiction law and introduced greater political control after complaints were brought against Ariel Sharon and George W. Bush. Spain too curtailed its universal jurisdiction law and Baltasar Garçon was expelled from the judiciary. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that diplomatic immunity prevented Belgian court from prosecuting the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and sovereign immunity means that Italian courts cannot allow suits for compensation from Germany over war crimes committed during World War II.

"It is hard not to see a common trend here that is driven by Realist reasoning," Voeten suggests.

As Roger Alford at Opinion Juris points out, while "The ATS as we know it is dead," it isn't exactly the end of universal jurisdiction. There's still the Torture Victims Protection Act, a 1991 law which allows for suits involving torture or extrajudicial killing against individuals in U.S. courts. (Unlike the ATS, this law was clearly intended by Congress to apply to crimes outside the United States.) But this too has been rolled back a bit. In 2012, the Supreme Court heard a case involving a torture suit against the Palestinian Authority and ruled that the TVPA could only be applied to suits against individuals.

For criminal cases, there's the extraterritorial torture statute, which was used to prosecute Charles "Chuckie" Taylor Jr. for torture committed in Liberia, but that only applies if the defendant is a U.S. national or at least present in the United States.

The notion of extraterritorial jurisdiction may not be dead, but the trend does seem to be against it.

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**Thursday, 25 April 2013**

