

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



Bumbuna Bridge

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.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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ICTJ

Friday, 24 May 2013

ICTJ Welcomes Kenya's TJRC Report

NEW YORK, May 24, 2013 — The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) welcomes the release of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) Report, which is the result of an official truth-seeking process undertaken by Kenya following the 2007/2008 post-election violence.

The report shares the TJRC's findings on gross violations of human rights, economic crimes, illegal acquisition of public land, marginalization of communities, and ethnic violence between 1963 and 2008.

“The TJRC report is a significant moment in Kenya’s attempts to address serious human rights violations,” said ICTJ President David Tolbert. “While the process has been far from perfect, there are a number of valuable aspects in the report that should serve as a point to refocus energies for genuine accountability efforts. In particular, the commission has made findings of responsibility against a large number of persons, some of whom are senior in the Kenyan government. These allegations must be credibly and expeditiously investigated by the appropriate authorities.”

The truth commission experienced a myriad of internal problems and challenges throughout its operations, including serious allegations of conflict of interest with respect to its chair, Amb. Bethuel Kiplagat.

The commission was also considerably delayed in completing and publishing its final report. The commission’s failure to publish its findings before the General Election on March 4, 2013, undermined one of the main rationales of the commission and denied the people of Kenya information to which they were entitled as they went to the polls.

“A number of criticisms and controversies about parts of the report have already circulated in the press, including on a critical chapter on land issues,” said Njonjo Mue, head of ICTJ’s office in Nairobi. “All such issues should be properly scrutinized and quickly resolved.”

Among its many recommendations, the TJRC calls on the Kenyan government to provide reparations to victims of historical injustices. This will require meeting victims’ demands for justice and accountability in respect of the violations committed against them. Civil society will have an important role to play in monitoring the implementation of recommendations aimed at addressing impunity and past historical injustices.

“The commission’s report must be carefully analyzed. Despite significant concerns, it is an opportunity for the institutions of the state to respond meaningfully, accept their responsibilities to the victims of human rights violations and historical injustices, and ensure that Kenya becomes a place where all citizens enjoy the basic rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution,” said Mue.

About ICTJ

ICTJ assists societies confronting massive human rights abuses to promote accountability, pursue truth, provide reparations, and build trustworthy institutions. Committed to the vindication of victims’ rights and the promotion of gender justice, we provide expert technical advice, policy analysis, and comparative research on transitional justice measures, including criminal prosecutions, reparations initiatives, truth seeking, memorialization efforts, and institutional reform. For more information, visit www.ictj.org.

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9News

Saturday, 25 May 2013

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/world/2013/05/25/10/52>

Alleged Bout co-conspirator extradited

A man accused of being the financial brains behind convicted international arms dealer Viktor Bout has been extradited from Australia to the US.

Syrian-born Richard Chichakli, 53, had been living in Melbourne under an alias and working as a cleaner for almost three years before authorities arrested him in January.

Chichakli's cover was blown after he attempted to apply for a job as a Victorian Protective Services Officer and a fingerprint check connected him to an Interpol red alert.

"As alleged, Richard Chichakli and Viktor Bout had common cause - the purchase of aircraft in violation of international sanctions against them for their involvement in facilitating arms delivery to some of the world's most lethal combat zones," Preet Bharara, the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, said on Friday (Saturday AEST).

"With his extradition today to face charges for his flagrant violation of international sanctions and other crimes, he will now face the same American justice Viktor Bout did."

Bout, nicknamed The Merchant of Death, is serving a 25-year prison term after his November 2011 conviction in New York for conspiring to sell millions of dollars of weapons to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a US designated foreign terrorist organisation based in Colombia.

Prior to Bout's arrest in March 2008, in Thailand, the Russian carried out a massive weapons trafficking business by assembling a fleet of cargo planes capable of transporting weapons and military equipment to various parts of the world, including Africa, South America, and the Middle East.

Chichakli allegedly assisted Bout in the operations and financial management of the network of aircraft companies.

"The arms Bout sold or brokered have fuelled conflicts and supported regimes in Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Sudan," Mr Bharara said.

"As a result of Bout's role in pouring arms into these international conflicts, his relationship with Chichakli, and Bout and Chichakli's close relationship with former Liberian President Charles Taylor, both have been the subject of United Nations Security Council sanctions."

Chichakli, a US citizen, was due to appear in the US District Court in Manhattan on Saturday Australian-time.

He is charged with violating the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, plus money laundering conspiracy, wire fraud conspiracy, and six separate counts of wire fraud in connection with the attempted aircraft purchases.

He faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison on each of the nine counts.

Mr Bharara thanked the Australian Federal Police, the Victoria State Police and the Australian Attorney General's Department for their help with the case.

The Post Newspaper (Zambia)

Sunday, 26 May 2013

ICC has no jurisdiction to try Kenyatta – Sata

By Kombe Chimpinde in Addis Ababa

PRESIDENT Michael Sata says the International Criminal Court has no jurisdiction to try Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

And President Sata says the time has come for Africa to fully handle its own affairs.

Responding to questions from journalists from various African countries shortly after he adjourned the committee of 10 heads of state on the United Nations reforms on Friday evening which he chaired, President Sata said Africans should not rely on foreign elements and allow the West to meddle in their internal affairs.



President Michael Sata with Rwandese President Paul Kagame (l) and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni (c) after the official opening of the 21st Ordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government summit in Addis Ababa, yesterday - Picture by Thomas Nsama

President Sata said since Independence, many countries were making progress. "It's time that Africa should handle its own affairs. We should not allow foreigners to be coming to interfere with us. If you find Kenyan

President or Zambian President is at fault with the Kenyan people or Zambian people, let the Kenyan or Zambian people deal with him, not somebody in Hague. Why can't they (Westerners) try their own relatives?" he asked.

President Sata was saying this in reference to President Kenyatta, who is currently facing charges of crimes against humanity before the ICC.

"What jurisdiction do they have? You have to look at the jurisdiction. Where do you find a European court that has jurisdiction in Africa?" President Sata asked.

"There are more cases in Europe which they are not dealing with. They are going back to old colonial era. It is time all the Africans...become in charge of your own affairs because during this struggle, we were not going to court in London. We were not going to court in Hague. They were taking us to local courts in our own countries. Why should we be going somewhere else (to be tried)? You the Kenyan people, if during the struggle, or during elections you killed each other, the people who killed - you book."

Asked how Africa intends to develop further with the existence of conflicts dotted in some regions, President Sata said creation of employment and equal distribution of wealth was key to ending conflicts. "What you young people don't understand is the problem we have in Africa is employment. We need to make you (young people) occupied because you are too intelligent and when you are lazy, you and your young girls you always want to create problems for us."

He said there was no substitute for hard work if Africa was to develop.

And President Sata on Friday evening adjourned to next January, the committee of ten Heads of State to be held in Sierra Leone.

This was after other leaders, that were scheduled to attend the meeting, failed to turn up due to their late arrival in Addis Ababa for the 50th anniversary celebrations that took place yesterday.

Oye Times (Canada)

Monday, 27 May 2013

International Criminal Court goes easy on Kenyan President

Despite the indictment of International Criminal Court (ICC), Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta won the general elections and is swiftly gaining popularity among influential figures in the country and abroad. President Kenyatta might be facing trial in The Hague on charges of crimes against humanity, but his supporters are still swearing allegiance to him.

“He was saving lives. He was providing a police escort for aid to displaced people,” insists Dan Kamau, a member of the President’s Kikuyu ethnic group.

On the other hand, the ICC has received solid evidence proving that Kenyatta played a key role in perking up the bloodbath after the 2007 election. Amidst the intricate controversy, Kenyatta won March elections with majority vote and managed to win over domestic supporters and foreign governments, including that of Canada’s.

“Canada is keen to explore opportunities to realize the full economic potential of trade with Kenya and the East African Community, especially for Canadian natural resource companies, which are becoming leaders in the Kenyan mining and oil and gas industries,” Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird said during his visit.

Analysts believe that Kenyatta’s newly gained power has influenced the judgment of ICC. The ICC has been urged to take a bold step in order to prove its credibility. The court is already under frequent attack in Africa because of a perception that it unfairly targets Africans for prosecution.

The pressure on ICC allegedly increased after President Kenyatta received multiple invitations from western countries. He was rewarded with quick invitations to London and Cape Town, and an early visit from Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird. Ironically, Britain has also invited him to a conference on Somalia this month.

Agence France Presse

Monday, 27 May 2013

Africa closes ranks to condemn ICC on Kenya cases

African leaders prepared Monday to pass a resolution urging the International Criminal Court to end crimes against humanity cases against Kenya's top leaders at The Hague and refer them back to their home country.

After lavish celebrations to mark its 50th anniversary on Saturday, the 54-member African Union was set to come together to condemn International Criminal Court (ICC) trials against one of its own, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, and his vice president.

"We will be approving this morning what the ministers have proposed, definitely," AU security commissioner Ramtane Lamamra told AFP, referring to a draft resolution agreed Friday by foreign ministers.

The resolution calls for the ICC to refer back to Kenya the cases against Kenyatta and Vice President William Ruto.

Kenyatta and Ruto, elected in March, both face a crimes against humanity trials in The Hague for their alleged roles in orchestrating deadly violence after previous elections in 2007 that left 1,100 people dead.

African leaders will call for the "termination of the ICC process... jurisdictions in Kenya will have to take care of the situation," Lamamra said.

The proposal would have no legal impact on ICC proceedings if passed, but would significantly boost Kenyatta's standing on the continent.

"Heads of state will support what the ministers have proposed," Lamamra added, speaking on the sidelines of the meeting at AU headquarters in the Ethiopian capital, where leaders are expected to endorse the proposal before they close their two-day summit later Monday.

Leaders have also been discussing conflict on the continent, including in volatile eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Islamist threats in Somalia, Mali and the Sahel region, and wider global security concerns.

"African security is inextricably linked to international security," Lamamra said.

Today's AU is the successor of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), established in 1963 in the heady days when independence from colonial rule was sweeping the continent.

The move against the ICC would be first time the pan-African body has moved formally against the international court, even though Kenyatta is the second African leader to face trial, after genocide charges were brought against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame, in a speech to the AU, said that while tackling impunity was "an important step toward sustainable peace and security", the ICC is biased.

"International criminal justice needs to be free of political interference and to uphold the principle of sovereign equality of states, an objective Rwanda believes the ICC has completely failed to accomplish," he said in a speech.

Many African leaders, as well as the AU as a body, have claimed the ICC unfairly targets Africans, while ignoring war crimes suspects in other parts of the world.

However, several of the African cases at the ICC were brought to trial at the request of the countries themselves, including from Uganda, DR Congo, Central African Republic and Mali.

The Kenyan cases moved to the ICC after a failure to make headway in a domestic court.

Amnesty International has criticised the move, saying it is a "worrying attempt by the Kenyan authorities to avoid justice".

The rights group called on the 34 AU members who have signed the ICC's founding Rome Statute -- including Kenya -- to "protect the international justice mechanism they have committed to".

Both Kenyatta and Ruto deny the charges and have agreed to cooperate fully with the ICC.

Lamamra said Africa remains committed to justice on the continent.

"Africa is committed to fighting impunity, but fighting impunity is not exclusive through the ICC," he said.

Despite optimistic rhetoric at Saturday's anniversary celebrations praising the spirit of pan-Africanism, the bloc is riven with divisions.

Splits revealed by the 2011 conflict in Libya -- when members squabbled between those wanting to recognise rebels and those backing leader Moamer Kadhafi -- showed its disunity and lack of global clout.

Kadhafi's death also stripped the AU of a major source of funding, and diplomats say the leaders have also been discussing ways to find backers for the cash-strapped body.

bur-pjm/jhb

UN Yugoslav Tribunal Contribution Acknowledged By Security Council

Members of the Security Council on Saturday marked the 20th anniversary of the United Nations tribunal set up in the wake of the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s, recognizing the Hague-based body's commitment to the fight against impunity for perpetrators of war crimes.

In a statement issued to the press, the Council recalled its resolution 827 of 25 May 1993, by which it

unanimously established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).



Courtroom 1 of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Photo: ICTY

“The members of the Security Council also note this year marks [the Tribunal's] twentieth anniversary,” the statement says, adding that they recognize the contribution of the ICTY in the fight against impunity for “the

most serious crimes of concern to the international community.”

Council members also welcome the forthcoming start on 1 July of operations of the branch of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals that is located in The Hague.

Through the statement, the Council members emphasize that the establishment of the Residual Mechanism was essential to ensure that the closure of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the ICTY “does not leave the door open to impunity for the remaining fugitives and for those whose appeals have not been completed.”

They also reaffirm their strong commitment to the fight against impunity.

The ICTY is tasked by the Council with trying those responsible for the worst war crimes and other breaches of international humanitarian law committed during the various conflicts in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Since its inception 19 years ago, the tribunal has indicted 161 persons.

Set up by the Council in December 2010, the Residual Mechanism is mandated to take over and finish the remaining tasks of both tribunals once their mandates expire. The Council has urged the two tribunals to conclude their work by the end of 2014.