

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



Some parts of Freetown

**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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## Heritage (Liberia)

Monday, 6 May 2013

Opinion

### **Funeral Eulogies, Praise-Singing and Preaching, 'He Was Good Man Gospel' - As Moses Blah Laid to Rest**

*"Our mutual value is for us the value of our mutual objects. Hence for us man himself is mutually of no value". - Karl Marx*

If the maxim that death is not the worst thing to happen to a man is anything to go by - former President Moses Blah can indeed retired peacefully as he joined his forebears. The day was "All Fools' Day" - a number of number stations sought to fool the Liberian people with strange newscasts. The former President had died on the same day but his story was not the usual April Fools' trick as it were.

Mourners are quite a bit perplexing though especially when the remains of the dead is lying petrified and cannot respond to the tributes being offered during wake-keeping or the funeral service. Everyone said Moses Blah was indeed a good although dead man. If there is some truth - then we could be inclined to say as food-hardy bigots that Charles Taylor was indeed a good man. Hmm! Any reason for suspicion about Taylor's attributes? If we were to speak to loyalists of the former president - the story would be amazing, wouldn't it?

Why equate Blah to Taylor? The former Vice President replaced his deceased predecessor - Enoch Doegolea. Vice Presidents work in the shadows of their bosses and they usually play nominal roles - such as serving as emissaries when the president proper is indisposed if you may or simply run errands - at least with all due respect to the president. No president has ever chosen an ambitious number two man. Could it be for obvious reasons or the typical tendency of humankind? We would rather implore inquisitive elements to speak to sitting or former presidents.

In an attempt to analyze the Moses Blah's factor in the context of the Liberian political equation viz-a-vis the NPP structure - we can confidently say Taylor was indeed his own man. The party was there in name and form but Taylor was the Lord and Gospel as it were. Before Blah, there was no gainsaying that his predecessor hailed for the same region like him. Did Taylor preserve the Vice presidency for only people of that region? Charles Taylor singularly relied on the resolve, commitment and tenacity of the people of Nimba to prosecute his bush war. He did not need to engage in any propaganda to win hearts and minds to turn the civilians in that region into fighting machines.

Arguably, the Vice Presidency in Taylor's reckoning was a convenient and most suitable way of appeasing the sons and daughters of Nimba county who volunteered and sacrificed their sweat, blood and toil to remove the late Samuel Doe from power. Did Doe's exit mean Liberia's woes were over? Surely not! It marked an incredulous beginning amid disastrous consequences.

Moses Blah was one of the self-styled Generals the Liberian conflict produced. Mind you, this country under Charles Taylor had tons of undeserved jokers who were deceived by bearing carrying ranks conferred, which were not based on any merit system. Surely, once you proved a brave and mindlessly chap who could kill a dozen people at a go, your reward would be a bucket of empty titles that were not merit. In the thick of the Liberian conflict in 1990, little was heard of Blah. We heard of Prince Johnson, Isaac Saye Musa, Sam Latrobe, Paul Vaye, Moses and Samuel Varney, Cooper Teah, Alfred Mehn, Putu Major, Albert Zoegreae, etc. He might not have been amongst the names frequently mentioned when it came to so-called Special Forces from Libya. In any case, he happened to have been one of them though.

Moses Blah showed up in Tripoli as Liberia's Ambassador to the North African country - where he remained on diplomatic assignment for a couple of years until he was recalled by Charles Taylor. His return coincided with the death of late Vice president Enoch Doegolea. Taylor was the 'big boss' who could at will make determination without any consultation. Charles Taylor had hand-picked Moses Blah as Doeloge's successor, a decision that did not warrant any contribution from the N.P.P. He was president and the party was his making - all other people could go to hell. Such authoritarian tendency elated a lot of his followers who still believe in this day and age that Taylor ought to be here to perpetuate his despotic reign. Would anything have changed if a successor had not been appointed in the first place? Not really folks!

Moses Blah saw himself on the wrong end of things after it was alleged that he tried to engage in some sinister plan when Taylor was whisked out of Accra, Ghana upon the issuance of an indictment for his arrest by **the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone**. N.P.F.L.'s notorious General and head of Taylor's dreaded Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU), Benjamin Yeaten announced on Kiss FM that: "There would be military vibrate if Taylor was ever arrested". Those who know Yeaten knew he was god damn serious especially where he bore traits of notoriety for the commission of gruesome and cold-blooded murders in the name of silencing critics of the regime. In spite of those allegations, Blah survived. But retributions and recriminations were the order of the day in the Taylor's era.

Despite being crossed on a number of occasions with his former boss - Blah still enjoyed the erratic confidence of his unpredictable master. When the last straw had finally broken the camel's back and Taylor's ability to make war anymore was untenable - his preference for a successor was Moses Blah. Taylor had no choice but attempt to put up a brave face. He advanced the argument of a succession plan any way. Did it really matter? Would it change anything? The writing on the wall clearly read: "You are out of this game. Secure for yourself a graceful exit"! Taylor left disgracefully and Blah took the oath of office as Executive President pending the arrival of the Transitional Government that was being formed in Accra, Ghana.

As President, Moses Blah will be remembered for making one major and significant diplomatic overture. Under his administration Liberia re-established full diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 2003. He could not pay salaries since his former boss absconded to Calabar in eastern Nigeria with millions stashed in his private mansion. How could he preside over anything reasonable when the drums of war raged? He did not present himself as a belligerent persona. He offered an Olive Branch to all sides - recognizing that Liberia is one country - indivisible - with liberty and justice for all. Prior to Blah's death he lived a relatively quiet life. Followers of Taylor seemed to have grimaced when the former President showed up in The Hague to take the witness stand against his former boss. But the former second in command to Taylor maintained that he was loyal to Taylor in spite of the latter's incarceration.

The plight of Blah who died of cardio-related ailment - generated debates across the divide with claims and counter-claims that the government did little to identify with the late president. Families of the late president confirmed that he received his retirement benefits regularly. With Blah being interred in his home town, the brouhaha associated with how former elected leaders in this country should be treated could be brought to rest when the parliament shall have finally weighed in on finalizing the legislation as such. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

## Heritage (Liberia)

Thursday, 2 May 2013

Opinion

### **MRU - a Region Transitioning From Conflict to Peace: It's Time to Walk the Walk...**

In 1989, Liberia became the birthplace of unholy events that later culminated into a full-scale regional imbroglio. Arguably, the regional conflict was thrust on greed and the overwhelming quest for amassing illicit wealth. Liberians must have been fed up with Doe, hmm! Were the ordinary Liberians sick of the regime or could it be that the politicians thought they had enough of his autocratic rule?

Whatever the case, neighboring Ivory Coast provided the launching path for cross-border incursion into the small West African nation. Liberians were indeed engrossed into the frenzy of a highly charged Christmas season.

Not quite to the astonishment of many Liberians, former General Services Agency (GSA) boss, Major Charles Taylor announced himself as the self-styled leader of the rebellion. Prior to the firing of the first shot from an N.D.P.L. barrel, the government of President Doe had done some swoop based on Intel gathered about the incursion and made a couple of arrests. Mainly ethnic Gios and Manos were arrested in the security swoop of suspected elements of the rebellion. Confessions supposedly made on ELTV by the captured rebels linked the suspects to being accomplices to the insurrection - that the regime thought had been nib in the bud. That perception was one of a nine day wonder for supporters of the Doe administration who had reckoned the situation was synonymous to series of coup plots supposedly nabbed before they saw the light of day.

The retreated rebels of Charles Taylor-led National Patriotic front of Liberia (N.P.F.L) regrouped and by late February 1990 - amid an onslaught to take the capital city. But the rapidity with which the insurgents were advancing on the seat of government was just beyond imagination. Liberians were ignorantly embracing a rebellion they seemed at the time to understand so little about.

The government was not prepared to play to the propaganda gallery and so Taylor reckoned the trick and utilized it to the fullest. Many had unknowingly come to see Taylor and his bunch of atrocious bandits as "messiahs". Yes, they reasoned out of stupor ignorance that indeed as 'rebels' they were "freedom fighters". Liberians were never in bondage - it was the quest for 'power by all means necessary' that underpinned the madness that occasioned our nation. Taylor won more of an ethnic-based sympathy, which saw folks from Nimba" swelled the ranks of the uprising.

While Liberians thought Taylor's eyes were simply set on the forced removal of Doe from office to enthrone democratic values - West Africa's newfound Mafia was bent on regional conquest to say the least. How could that have been made possible? In Taylor's war prosecuting efforts he came to meet and group of Sierra Leoneans led by Corporal Foday Sankor; a photographer-turned revolutionary in a Libyan training camp. They seemed to have become like-minded bed-fellows. Sankor joined Taylor in aiding and abetting the mayhem in Liberia. When Taylor realized he had covered his so-called 99.9% of the country except Monrovia - Sierra Leone became the new target. In 1991, in spite the tens of thousands of Liberian refugees the good people of Sierra Leone were generously harboring amid the tragedy that was besetting Liberia - Taylor sought to support a bush war campaign on Liberia's western frontier. Sierra Leone was the target. Foday Sankor had ambition to rule Sierra Leone as part of the reason why he even went to Libya to train in Guerrilla warfare. He did not have the kind of manpower capability to make any significant impact and was forced to become shadowed by Charles Taylor. Realizing the Americans' interpretation of "no free lunch" - Taylor's support couldn't come as any surprise folks.

The Flames of an imposed conflict rocked the former British colony as the competing militias' recklessness rained havoc on innocent Sierra Leoneans. The rapacious action of one bad egg from a Liberian basket sought to ruin the once cozy relationship between two friendly neighbors that had co-existed for decades. Taylor had uncharacteristically lit fire on the mountain - coerced Liberians to prosecute a war they had absolutely no business being involved in. An emerging "West African Hitler" was set on the horizon bent on some kind of bellicose.

It took the combined intervention of Nigerian and British military supremacy to squarely deal with the rebellion in Sierra Leone. Peace was finally restored after nearly a decade of out-right brutality visited on the Sierra Leonean people especially outside their own choosing. As war raged in Liberia and Sierra Leone - neighboring Guinea and Ivory Coast were the safe havens that offered sanctuaries for refuge-stricken Liberians and Sierra Leoneans who were bundled out of their homelands by the trappings of mindless conflict brought on them by faceless elements.

Like the strong, brave and intelligent Guinean commandoes were able to successfully repelled fierce aggression from the Portuguese in 1970, they (Guineans) similarly remained resolute in completely thwarting insurgents seeking to overthrow the government of the late Lasanna Conte amid cross-border attacks from Liberia. What was the story of Guinea versus Portugal incursion? Operation Green Sea was an amphibious attack on Conakry, the capital of Guinea, by between 350 and 420 Portuguese soldiers and Portuguese-led Guinean fighters in November 1970. The goals of the operation included the overthrow of Ahmed Sékou Touré's regime, capture of the leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), Amílcar Cabral, destruction of the naval and air assets of the PAIGC and its Guinean supporters, and the rescue of Portuguese POWs held in Conakry.

The attackers withdrew after rescuing the POWs and destroying some PAIGC ships and Guinean air force infrastructure, but failed to capture Amílcar Cabral, the leader of PAIGC guerrillas, or to topple the regime of Guinean dictator Ahmed Sékou Touré.

In 1952, Ahmed Sékou Touré became the leader of the Guinean Democratic Party (PDG). In 1957, Guinea had an election in which the PDG won 56 of 60 seats. The PDG conducted a plebiscite in September 1958 by which Guineans overwhelmingly opted for immediate independence rather than for continued association with France. The French withdrew and, on 2 October 1958, Guinea proclaimed itself a sovereign and independent Republic with Touré as its President. In 1960, Touré welcomed to Guinea and supported Amílcar Cabral and his organization, the PAIGC, which was seeking the independence of Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau) and Cape Verde from Portugal. In 1961, the PAIGC began the Guinea-Bissau War of Independence.

In a show of faceless craze after the Guineans launched a counter-offensive against Guinean dissident forces that used Liberia as their springboard for the incursion - Charles Taylor vowed to fight on with Liberian blood, sweat and tears to preserve Liberian territory. That didn't make any sense since the war effort was not in Liberia's best interest let alone approved by Liberians. Shamelessly, Taylor remarked: "He that is down fears no fall".

Along Liberia's eastern corridor is French-speaking Ivory Coast - a country that has enjoyed several years of peace, tranquility and economic boom. Under the rule of the country's longest serving Medical Doctor-turned politician, Felix Houphÿ uett-Boigny, the West Africa nation proved an economically prosperous example of an emerging market. Ivory Coast enjoyed a cocoa boom while the country forged ahead with an incredible infrastructural development. It is no gainsaying that countries that enjoy peace must always endeavor to learn from the experiences and missteps of war-torn nations to avoid wrong pitfalls.

In real time the chicks had come home to roast - as turmoil hit the former French colony. Gen. Robert Guie staged a non-resistant coup in 1999 against Henri Kona Bedie when mutineer soldiers went on the rampage in the capital Abidjan. His attempt to organize and participate in elections as player and referee

worsened his woes. Although not announced as president, veteran opposition leader lead - Laurent Gbagbo declared himself winner in those controversial polls. Gen. Robert Guie was subsequently brutally murdered under mysterious circumstances. Gbagbo seized power and established his authority in an autocratic style. While the stakes of fragility remain high in Ivory Coast - recipe for lasting peace is anchored on the commitment of all Ivoirians to end the bitterness.

While pundits consider the region still fragile, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Ivory Coast are gradually nursing the national healing process to restore stability to their respective countries in order to get on with the crucial task of nation-building. But the leaders of the Mano River Basin have resolved to become each other's keeper. They have a point as peace and stability in either country means fewer headaches for the previously troubled region. But actions and not rhetoric from the lips of the regional leaders converged on the Liberian capital, Monrovia would go a long way to bring the much needed lasting peace, stability, socioeconomic benefits to the sub-region. Never again should we allow our territories to become havens for the violent oppression of humanity.

## Associated Press

Monday, 6 May 2013

### **In CAR, diamonds are a rebel's best friend**

By KRISTA LARSON

NDELE, Central African Republic -- Armed with rocket-propelled grenades and Kalashnikov rifles, Seleka rebels who ousted Central African Republic's president six weeks ago are solidifying their control over the country's lucrative diamond industry and have even been selling some of the stones, witnesses here in the isolated and violent north say.

Rebels have for several years controlled some of the diamond-producing areas in the north, but with the overthrow of President Francois Bozize in March the Seleka rebel coalition now is the government, posing one of the greatest challenges in years to international efforts to stem the trade of "blood diamonds."

Fighters are blocking off diamond-producing areas, residents and local officials told an Associated Press reporter who recently visited Ndele, a rebel-controlled town in northern Central African Republic.

Central African Republic's new government insists that it intends to fully comply with the Kimberley Process, which aims to curb the trade in blood diamonds whose profits have driven some of the bloodiest conflicts in Africa over the past 20 years. It went into effect in 2003 in the aftermath of the brutal West African civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia where diamonds were used by armed groups to fund the conflicts.

"We remain in the Kimberley Process and we respect the principle," said new Information Minister Christophe Gazam Betty.

Central African Republic Diamonds

Krista Larson

Newly appointed Minister of Mines Herbert Gontran Djono-Ahaba declined on several occasions to be interviewed on the subject. He is a member of the Seleka alliance, whose fighters have set up checkpoints along the dirt paths leading to mining areas around Ndele.

Seleka rebels are now in control there, say residents who fled the town of Sangba, about 85 kilometers (50 miles) southeast of Ndele.

"The diamond business is now forbidden to anyone who is not with Seleka," said one local official who fled from Sangba. The official refused to be identified because of security concerns.

Even more worrisome, the Seleka members are - according to several people who fled Sangba - being aided by armed fighters from neighboring Sudan known as the Janjaweed, who were accused of committing atrocities against civilians in Darfur. Sudan, whose leader is wanted by the International Criminal Court, is not part of the Kimberley Process. Observers fear many of Central African Republic's illicit diamonds are being funneled into Sudan.

The residents spoke to AP only on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals from the rebels, who roam through the area's towns in stolen vehicles full of rocket-propelled grenades and other weapons.

The Kimberley Process system for certifying the origin of diamonds is meant to inform customers about where the stones originated. Diamonds are exported with certificates saying they are conflict-free. Countries found to be in violation cannot legally export their gems to the major diamond cutting hubs of Belgium, Israel and India. The case of Central African Republic could become the most significant test in years of the Kimberley Process.

The Kimberley Process has initiated procedures that could lead to a temporary suspension of Central African Republic until a review mission can be sent, Kimberley Process chair Welile Nhlapo told a meeting of the diamond industry in Tel Aviv on Monday.

"The developments in the Central African Republic inform us that there are still situations where conflict diamonds continue to fuel rebel activities to remove elected official governments," Nhlapo told the meeting of the World Diamond Council.

Read more here: <http://www.fresnobee.com/2013/05/06/3288103/in-car-diamonds-are-a-rebels-best.html#storylink=cpy>

VOA

Monday, 6 May 2013

### **ICC Postpones Trial for Kenyan Deputy President**

The International Criminal Court [ICC] has delayed the trial of Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto, who is facing charges of crimes against humanity.

The trial was set to begin May 28, but a court statement Monday said it was "provisionally" postponed until after judges hold status conferences with prosecutors and defense attorneys.

Ruto is accused of helping to organize a campaign of ethnic violence after Kenya's disputed 2007 presidential election. More than 1,100 people were killed and 300,000 displaced from their homes.

Despite the charges, Ruto was elected as the running mate of new Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta in March. Kenyatta is facing similar charges at the ICC and is due to go on trial in July. In March, his lawyers asked the court to drop the charges, after the case against the president's co-accused, Francis Muthaura, collapsed.

A Kenyan radio executive, Joshua Arap Sang, is being tried alongside Ruto, although the ICC has said his contribution to the crimes was "not essential."

This is the second time the ICC has delayed the trial, which was originally set to begin last month.

The court says that in its status conferences, scheduled for this week and next, it will address prosecutors' request to add five people to the list of witnesses, among other procedural matters.

## Hirondelle News Agency (Lausanne)

Monday, 6 May 2013

### **Rwanda: Weekly Summary - Jerbo Death Still to Be Confirmed, Uwinkindi Trial Start Drags**

Arusha — A Sudanese rebel leader indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) is said to have been killed in fighting in Darfur. Meanwhile in Kigali, a Pentecostal Pastor is refusing to go to trial without independent investigators.

#### **RWANDA:**

Mugesera request fails: Rwandan linguist Léon Mugesera, extradited from Canada a year ago, Monday asked in vain for the judges of the Kigali High Court to reject certain witnesses that the Prosecutor wants to bring against him. Mugesera said some of them were liars and should be found guilty of perjury. The Chamber, which has not yet started hearing witnesses, rejected the request on grounds it was premature.

Uwinkindi trial slow to start: Pastor Jean Uwinkindi, the first ICTR detainee to be transferred to Rwanda, appeared before his judges on Thursday. He asked once again that his defence team be strengthened with independent investigators to be paid by the Rwandan government. Uwinkindi is refusing to go to trial before this question is settled. The judges will hand down their decision on May 16. MICT

MICT issues arrest warrant for Kabuga: The Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT) has launched its own arrest warrant for Rwandan businessman Félicien Kabuga, who was already under an ICTR arrest warrant. The new arrest warrant, available on the MICT website, replaces that of November 8, 2001. Kabuga, who is still at large, is alleged by the prosecutor to be the main financier of the 1994 genocide.

#### **ICC:**

Jerbo death not yet confirmed: The International Criminal Court (ICC) said Friday that the death of Sudanese rebel leader Saleh Jerbo, announced by his defence, has not yet been confirmed. Jerbo is indicted for crimes committed in Darfur. According to his defence, Jerbo was killed in fighting last month. If his death is confirmed, the case against him will be withdrawn.

#### **NEXT WEEK:**

The Appeals Chamber of the ICTR will on Monday hear the arguments of defence and prosecution in the case of former Kivumu mayor Grégoire Ndahimana. Ndahimana was sentenced on November 17, 2011 to 15 years in jail for genocide and extermination as a crime against humanity. Both parties are appealing.

From Tuesday to Friday, the same Chamber will hear arguments in the "Military II" case. The case involves four former officers, including General Augustin Bizimungu, who was head of the army during the genocide, and General Augustin Ndindiliyimana, who was head of the gendarmerie.