

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



102 children ages 3-12 from the Guntmag Y.M.C.A. Preparatory and Primary School in Kissy visited the Special Court on Friday

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:

Monday, 1 July 2013

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

Monday, 1 July 2013

LAWYERS educate Kono Women & Chiefs

By Betty Milton

Legal Access for Women Yearning for Equal Rights and Justice (LAWYERS) with funding from UNFPA has schooled Chiefs, Women and Children in Fiama in the Kono District about the three Gender Acts with emphasis on the Sexual Offences Act.

Explaining about the visit to Kono the Programme Manager of LAWYERS Christiana Davies-Cole said the project is part of the UNFPA project for 2013 which is aimed at giving legal

counseling by the paralegals in the four regions, North, East South and Western Area.

She said that her organizations had concluded the counseling for the Western Area and they choose Kono for the Eastern Region where over 300 Chiefs, Women and Children were targeted to be educated about the three gender Acts, its effects and impact on all including men, women and children.

The programme Manager explained that at the end of these counseling sessions it is hoped that the targeted

audience would have known about the Acts and also to strengthen the paralegals to conduct counseling and do other work.

At the end of the sessions Davies-Cole said, the people asked several questions about the three Acts and that they show appreciation to the penalties in the Acts as this will bring an end to sexual and gender based violence. She added that the Chiefs promised their support to end gender based violence and early marriage in the chiefdom.

BBC

Sunday, 30 June 2013

Senegal police arrest Chad former leader Hissene Habre

Police in Senegal have arrested Chad's former leader Hissene Habre, who is wanted for alleged atrocities during his eight-year rule.

Mr Habre's lawyer El Hadji Diouf said he was taken from his home in Dakar by paramilitary police to an unknown location on Sunday.

The 70-year-old has been under house arrest since 2005 in Senegal, where he fled after being deposed in 1990.

He denies killing and torturing tens of thousands of his opponents.

Last year the UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Senegal to put him on trial or extradite him to face justice overseas.

His arrest comes days after US President Barack Obama praised the efforts of Senegal's current President Macky Sall to bring him to trial at the start of his Africa tour.

Historic precedent

Human rights group have been pushing Senegal to put Mr Habre on trial for decades.

Senegalese MPs passed a law in December allowing a special African Union tribunal to be created in the country to try the former leader, who has been dubbed "Africa's Pinochet".

The charges against him date from 1982, when Mr Habre came to power in a coup, until 1990, the year he was ousted.

Mr Habre was first indicted in Senegal in 2000 - but the country's courts ruled at the time that he could not be tried there.

His alleged victims then filed complaints under Belgium's universal jurisdiction law, which allows the country's judges to prosecute human rights offences committed anywhere in the world.



Former Chadian President Hissene Habre has lived in Senegal for more than two decades

Who is Hissene Habre?

- Born in 1942 to ethnic Toubou herders in northern Chad
- Given scholarship to study political science in France
- First came to the world's attention in 1974 when his FAN rebels captured three European hostages to ransom for money and arms
- Seized power in 1982, allegedly with the help of the CIA; ousted by current President Idriss Deby in 1990
- Accused of systematically persecuting groups he distrusted
- A former swimming pool was used as an underground prison where survivors say they were subjected to electric shocks, near-asphyxia and "supplice des baguettes", when their heads were squeezed between sticks

He was charged by Belgium with crimes against humanity and torture in 2005, but Senegal has refused four extradition requests.

Plans in 2011 to repatriate Mr Habre to Chad, where a court in 2008 sentenced him to death in absentia for planning to overthrow the government, were stopped following a plea from the UN.

A trial in Senegal would set a historic precedent as until now African leaders accused of atrocities have only been tried in international courts.

Human Rights Watch

Sunday, 30 June 2013

Press Release

Senegal: Hissène Habré in Police Custody

Indictment Expected for Chad's Former Dictator

(Dakar, June 30, 2013) – The placing of Hissène Habré, Chad's former dictator, into police custody in Senegal on June 30 is a milestone in the long campaign to bring him to justice, Human Rights Watch said today.

“The wheels of justice are turning”, said Reed Brody, counsel for Human Rights Watch who has worked with Habré's victims since 1999. “After 22 years, Habré's victims can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.”

Habré is accused of thousands of political killings and systematic torture during his presidency, from 1982 to 1990, when he was deposed by President Idriss Deby Itno and fled to Senegal. He has been living in exile in Senegal ever since. After a 22-year campaign by his victims, Extraordinary African Chambers were established in the Senegalese court system in February to prosecute the worst crimes during his rule.

The chambers' chief prosecutor, Mbacké Fall, asked to have Habré taken into police custody (*garde à vue*). Under Senegalese law, a person may be detained for up to 48 hours for investigation purposes if there is evidence to believe that they have committed an offense. The detention can be extended for another 48 hours with the prosecutor's permission.

The prosecutor is expected to bring charges (*réquisitoire introductif*) before the investigating judges of the chambers and request Habré's indictment before his period of police custody expires. If Habré is indicted by the judges, he could be remanded to custody (*mandat de dépôt*) while the judges carry out their pretrial investigation.

The pretrial investigation is expected to last 15 months. It will potentially be followed by a trial in late 2014 or 2015.

“I have been waiting more than two decades to see Hissène Habré in court,” said Clément Abaifouta, president of the Association of Victims of the Crimes of Hissène Habré's Regime (AVCRHH) who as a political prisoner during Habré's rule was forced to dig mass graves and bury hundreds of other detainees. “We are finally going to be able to confront our tormentor and regain our dignity as human beings.”

Human Rights Watch

Thursday, 27 June 2013

Press Release

Senegal: Obama Backs Hissène Habré Court

(Dakar, June 27, 2013) – President Barack Obama’s endorsement of Senegal’s efforts to bring to book the former Chadian dictator Hissène Habré is a recognition of the case’s importance for African justice, Human Rights Watch said today.

According to two sources present at President Obama’s June 27 meeting with Senegal’s president Macky Sall, Obama praised Senegal’s establishment of the Extraordinary African Chambers in February 2013, to try the worst crimes of Habré’s government. Obama said the United States would provide resources to support the work of the tribunal.

“Senegal deserves credit for offering a path to justice for Habré’s long suffering victims,” said Reed Brody, counsel for Human Rights Watch who has worked with Habré’s victims since 1999. “The Hissène Habré trial, if it is fair and transparent, could mark a turning point for justice in Africa.”

Habré is accused of thousands of political killings and systematic torture during his presidency, from 1982 until 1990. He was deposed by President Idriss Deby Itno and fled to Senegal, where he has been living ever since, as his victims waged a 22-year campaign to bring him to justice.

Although a Senegalese judge indicted Habré in 2000, the previous Senegalese president, Abdoulaye Wade, found one pretext after another to delay Habré’s reckoning, turning his victims’ saga into what the Nobel Peace Prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu described as an “interminable political and legal soap opera.”

The Obama administration has supported the victims’ campaign to bring Habré to justice. In September 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wrote to then-President Wade to urge a speedy trial. In a June 2012 report to Congress, Secretary Clinton stated that, “[a]fter 20 years, the victims deserve justice and their day in court” and urged Senegal to take “concrete steps” to prosecute Habré. That report followed a December 2011 congressional request to report on “steps taken by the Government of Senegal to assist in bringing Habré to justice.”

After Macky Sall’s election as president of Senegal in April 2012, and the decision of the International Court of Justice on July 20, 2012, ordering Senegal to prosecute Habré “without further delay” or to extradite him, Senegal moved swiftly to reach an agreement with the African Union on the special court with Senegalese and other African judges, which was inaugurated on February 8, 2013. The court’s prosecutor visited Chad from June 8 to June 16, 2013, and is expected to file formal charges against Habré shortly.

“In just over one year, Macky Sall’s government has accomplished more to reward the perseverance and tenacity of Habré’s victims than Senegal had over the course of two decades,” Brody said.

Voice of America

Sunday, 30 June 2013

Mano River Countries Tackle Cross-Border Arms

Countries of the Mano River basin in West Africa are trying to forge a joint strategy to counter the cross-border movement of armed groups and the illegal trafficking of weapons in their region. Representatives of the United Nations and regional organizations joined the talks on Saturday.

Decades of armed conflict and political strife, including civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, have caused lasting issues of insecurity in the Mano River region, particularly in border areas where fighters and refugees can flow easily from one country to the next.

This past week, ministers from Ivory Coast, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone met with the secretary-general of the Mano River Union (MRU), the president of ECOWAS and representatives of the United Nations and African Union in Dakar to discuss trans-border threats.

ECOWAS's director of political affairs, Abdel-Fatau Musah, said that despite its troubled history, the Mano River Union now had the chance to become a role model for other conflict-ridden countries in West Africa.

"What we have done here is that the Mano River Union, which was once the source of chronic instability in the region, is taking the lead in trying to deal with the effects of that cycle of instability and moving the region to a new stage in terms of human security and development as a whole. This is what we have witnessed today - the beginning of such a move," said Musah.

Musah said that to do this, the MRU planned to create a joint security strategy to deal with issues in the sub-region, including the cross-order movement of armed groups and illicit trade of small arms.

The U.N. Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) said small arms were often the weapon of choice during civil wars, and widely used for terrorism and organized crime. The UNODA said the build-up of small arms within a country could increase tensions with neighboring countries.

The U.N. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Said Djinnit, said that a joint-security action plan was important not only for maintaining peace in the region, but also for fostering economic growth.

He said without peace and security there can't be any development in the sub-region. That is why, he said, it was important to work together to reinforce the need for a joint security measure. Djinnit said the strategy they will develop would create the conditions for peace and security that will allow for lasting development in Mano River Basin.

The U.N. official said a steering and drafting committee has been put in place to discuss the scope of the strategy and to create the mechanisms needed to address trans-border issues. He said it planned to propose the security strategy by the end of the year.

Associated Press

Friday, 28 June 2013

Saturday, July 6

Today is Saturday, July 6, the 187th day of 2013. There are 178 days left in the year.

Highlights in history on this date:

-SNIP-

2003 - Liberian President Charles Taylor accepts an offer of asylum in nearby Nigeria. U.S. President George W. Bush made Taylor's departure a condition of U.S. troops joining an international peacekeeping force in Liberia.

-SNIP-

Independent Online (South Africa)

Sunday, 30 June 2013

US and SA: wary pals

By PIET RAMPEDI and MOSHOESHOE MONARE

-SNIP-

Zuma told Obama that there was a perception on the continent that the International Criminal Court was targeting African leaders.

Obama agreed with Zuma that the African Union should engage with The Hague, but warned that Africa should not allow “horrible leaders” such as former Liberian president Charles Taylor to act with impunity “in the name of African unity”.

Frontpage Africa (Liberia)

Monday, 1 July 2013

Liberia's Reconciliation Process: A Mockery To The Ordinary Liberians

Written by Coleman J. Payne, Contributing Writer

The country's reconciliation process in its context, for me, and the suffering masses simplify a serious mockery and a gross disrespect and an insult to our emerging democracy and the ordinary Liberians; and it has the propensity to undermine our peace and security. Ambassador George Weah, head of the Reconciliatory Committee, on June 21, 2013 officially launched the National Peace Jamboree, and at the same, this launching process was graced by high profile soccer stars. With this process, I think that using the taxpayers' money to bring in soccer stars add up frustrations and pains at the highest extend.

Let me ask these questions: Had Amb. George investigated who are those victims need to be reconciled with? Had those perpetrators willing to adhere to the recommendations of the TRC? Had Amb. George Weah understood that amid mounting injustice, unemployment, and high level of poverty people cannot be reconciled? These questions are critical and sensitive and must be looked at a broader spectrum before embarking on the reconciliatory endeavor.

Interestingly, the country reconciliation process shouldn't be cosmetic but rather every victim as a result of the fourteen years of brutal political crisis wombs must be healed while those who created heinous crimes and atrocities must be brought to justice. Should we say that we need reconciliation, while those perpetrators and their children enjoy the country's resources and the victims die in abject poverty?

Again, to tell you why I think the reconciliatory process is not appropriate, the launching of it was entirely graced by top government officials, and their children, cronies, and those who are secretly enjoying the country's resources and thereby leaving out those family members who people were victimized and also individuals who were killed, sexually exploited, properties damaged, as well as those youth and children who were amputated. Did you see them during the launching of the reconciliatory match and the sport game? Besides, some of those people could not even afford the said amount requested as entry fare for the game.

Today we can see that the privileged few, there are these luxuries: three meals a day, enough cash for hospitals or clinics, scholarships or money for their children to attend prestigious schools, and while Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) current and powerful private generators light their fortified homes; there are twenty-four-hours of maximum security protection.

In living rooms across the ordinary Liberians, there are hateful sentiments: unemployment, hunger, homelessness, insecurity, overcrowding, inadequate public schools, lack of healthcare for millions, poverty, injustice, crimes (prostitution, armed robbery and corruption sounding the loudest), and papas that were once promised to bring homes black plastic bag full of hope, are bringing homes black plastic bag full of frustrations and meeting disrespect from their children at homes. Against this backdrop, it is understandable why the ordinary Liberians are not satisfied; because millions of them cannot make ends meet in the land of plenty-they still live in abject poverty.

Every time one sees millions of Liberians unemployed, homeless, and illiterate; every time I see the youth of the Ordinary Liberians trapped behind prison walls instead of class rooms; every time I see young future mothers and current mothers turned prostitute in order to more ends meet; every time I see

qualified technicians unemployed due to lack of industries; every time I see little boys and girls abandoning schools to sell cold water on city streets so that they and their parents may not go to bed hungry; every time an innocent child died for lack of medical facility, and every time I see corrupt government officials go unpunished, I know I have caught a glimpse at deep regret. A regret that asks what has happened to my nation? Why do we allow the oppression of the Ordinary Liberians to continue, and worst of all, allow our brothers and sisters to suffer its toll some wrath?

To conclude conclusively, it is necessary where we stand, as a nation, to reconcile ourselves but the preconditions to the total realization of this process, must be done by implementing the True Reconciliation Commission recommendations, provisions of full employment, good healthcare delivery system, justice for all, and overall, by creating an enabling environment through which the citizenry can meet their full potential in accordance with their needs and interest. And if the “Sweet Land OF LIBERTY SHOULD LONG BE OURS” is Practiced, RECONCILIATION IS CERTAIN!

New Democrat (Liberia)

Wednesday, 26 June 2013

Taylor's Man Dies In Mali

Written by ND Staff

The body of the late Kukoi Samba Sanyang, the mastermind of the attempted coup d'état against President David D. Jawara of Gambia in 1981, was early Saturday morning repatriated to Dakar from Bamako, where he died from an unspecified illness on Tuesday.

Gambian dissident Kukoi Samba Sanyang aka Dr. Manning was one of Charles Taylor's most feared generals assigned at the NFPL's so-called Soweto death camp in Buchanan, Grand Buchanan County.

The Senegalese government sponsored the repatriation barely two months after the authorities in Dakar expelled him from their country.

The body is presently in a mortuary in Dakar awaiting a decision by his relatives as to where he will be buried. Sources indicate that while some members of the family want his remains to be buried in his home village of Wassadung in Foni, Gambia, others are uncertain that the Gambian authorities may not grant permission for that to happen, prompting more uncertainties about where to bury his body.

Meanwhile, the Senegalese Prime Minister Abdoul Mbaye on Saturday denied claims by some human rights bodies that Kukoi had acquired Senegalese citizenship and, therefore, it was wrong for Senegal to expel him from the country. Senegalese Radio and Television (RTS) quoted Prime Minister Mbaye as stating that Senegal will never expel its citizen.

Amnesty International-Senegal published some of Kukoi's documents claiming that he had acquired Senegalese citizenship in 2009, but the Senegalese government disputed the authenticity of those documents.

Kukoi Samba Sanyang fled Gambia following his botched coup that was foiled by paratroopers ordered by former President Abdul Diouf with whom restored President Jawara established the short-lived loose Senegambia federation.

He reportedly trained in Libya with Taylor and others like Cpl. Foday Sankor, hoping to some day rule Gambia if Taylor's design of West African conquest materialized.

Human Rights Watch

Monday, 1 July 2013

Press Release

Côte d'Ivoire: Security Force Extortion

Serious Consequences for Health, Livelihoods in Country's West

(Paris, July 1, 2013) – Security forces routinely and openly extort money at roadblocks in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire, Human Rights Watch said today. The roadblocks, ostensibly in place to address insecurity in the face of cross-border incursions and banditry, have become a lucrative, criminal venture for soldiers and gendarmes, whose abuse threatens economic livelihoods and food prices in a region already devastated by the 2010-2011 post-election crisis.

Human Rights Watch interviewed 82 victims of and witnesses to the extortion in western Côte d'Ivoire. They said that women traveling to and from markets, immigrants from neighboring countries, and motorbike and public transport drivers are particularly singled out for this form of harassment. Even people seeking medical care have been targeted. In one case, the delay may have contributed to the death of a 3-year-old child. Members of the security forces at times threaten, unlawfully detain, or even beat people who refuse or fail to pay.

“Members of the security forces are shamelessly enriching themselves off of the backs of people in western Côte d'Ivoire,” said Matt Wells, Côte d'Ivoire researcher at Human Rights Watch. “Despite the Ouattara government's early promises to crack down on extortion at checkpoints, it continues in full force in that part of the country.”

Most drivers and other residents of western Côte d'Ivoire felt that things have improved on the major roads between cities under the Ouattara government. They described fewer checkpoints on these roads as compared to when former President Gbagbo was in power and fewer cases of arbitrary detention and beatings – previously a common practice against northern Ivorians and West African immigrants. However, many of the same people expressed that the practice of checkpoint extortion on secondary, unpaved roads was perhaps worse than ever.

The Ivorian government should investigate and prosecute members of the security forces involved in extortion, Human Rights Watch said. The government should place units of its anti-racket brigade in major cities around the country, and extend the reach of its anti-racket hotline throughout the country so that people can quickly and anonymously report abuses. The anti-extortion efforts are based in Abidjan and not easily accessible in the West.

Western Côte d'Ivoire has been the recurrent site of cross-border attacks from Liberia, most recently on March 13 and 23 in the villages of Zilebly and Petit Guiglo, respectively. While this may justify a heavier security presence in the region, including checkpoints, that is no excuse for extortion, Human Rights Watch said.

In February and June 2013, Human Rights Watch visited some 50 villages between Duékoué and Toulepleu and between Danané and Zouan-Hounien, interviewing dozens of drivers, women who trade at markets, owners of small shops and restaurants, and immigrants, who all described the persistent and open practice of checkpoint extortion and associated criminal behavior by security forces manning them.

Human Rights Watch interviewed drivers of motorbikes, taxis, mini-buses, and even bicycles who all described being regularly forced to pay to pass checkpoints. People on bicycles generally pay 200 CFA (US\$0.40) at each checkpoint, while drivers of vehicles often pay 1,000 to 2,000 CFA (\$2-4). A driver of a 20-seat Gbaka (mini-bus) based in Guiglo told Human Rights Watch that drivers are charged the same amount at every checkpoint on each of the major routes from Guiglo, even when all of their paperwork is in order.

The extortion is carried out openly. Human Rights Watch repeatedly saw vehicles held up at checkpoints. In February, near the village of Kahen, a Human Rights Watch researcher watched as a soldier complained about having to find change for a driver who did not have the exact amount. Checkpoints on secondary roads are often particularly abusive.

On the main roads between towns, all of the security forces – including the military, the gendarmerie, the customs unit, and the waters and forests unit – are often at checkpoints and involved in extortion. “They’re all the same,” was a common refrain from drivers. On the secondary, unpaved roads, soldiers from the country’s military, the Republican Forces (or FRCI), primarily oversee checkpoints and are the main culprits, victims and other witnesses said.

Drivers of motorbikes and transport vehicles described the extortion as organized, suggesting the practice was systematic. They said they generally pay only once a day at each checkpoint, with members of the security forces writing down the driver’s name or car number when he passes through the first time. A driver in Guiglo said, “You hear a [soldier] yell to his friend, ‘Has car number 322 come through yet today? No? Okay, you have to pay 1,000 CFA.’ They don’t hide their racketing. They do it as if it’s their right, as if they’re authorized.”

Human Rights Watch documented three cases in which members of the security forces beat people for refusing to pay, including a young man whose arm was fractured and spent three days in a hospital. In several other cases, the security forces forced people to remain at the checkpoint for hours, even overnight, until the driver could get someone to bring the money to pay them.

Human Rights Watch documented four cases in which soldiers manning checkpoints blocked people seeking emergency health care for a family member. A father trying to take his gravely ill 3-year-old to a hospital described how soldiers demanded 3,000 CFA (\$6). The father did not have the money and begged to be let go, but the soldiers refused – forcing the man to walk to the nearest village to borrow money. More than an hour after arriving at the checkpoint, the father paid the money and was able to leave with his son. The child died before reaching the regional hospital where he could access the care he needed.

“Some soldiers at checkpoints are so relentless in their quest for money from each passerby that they are willing to impede even people seeking emergency medical care,” Wells said. “Such disgusting behavior will only fuel the distrust many people in western Côte d’Ivoire have for the security forces.”

In some areas of western Côte d’Ivoire, the number of checkpoints and sums demanded increase on market days, taking advantage of people traveling to buy and sell. Human Rights Watch documented how members of the security forces at some checkpoints extort money from women buying and selling goods at the market. Several sellers said they had to raise prices of the food they sell to cover the payments. Extortion is so extreme around the village of Kaade that several residents expressed concern about whether its Sunday market would survive.

Human Rights Watch also found that immigrants from Burkina Faso are targeted for particular abuse in the region around Bloléquin. Even when traveling as passengers, the security forces often confiscate their identity papers at checkpoints and demand 1,000 CFA before returning them, asserting that the papers are illegal because obtained in another region of Côte d'Ivoire. A government official told Human Rights Watch that such identity papers are valid throughout the country.

Human Rights Watch presented its findings to officials in the Ivorian presidency, the Prime Minister's Office, and the military. The officials promised to investigate promptly and that "there would be no pity" for security forces engaged in extortion. One official provided documents showing the military's efforts to improve its human rights performance, including at checkpoints. The strategy involves human rights training, including a session on behavior at checkpoints; and sanctions for those who commit human rights violations. The official said the military prosecutor has brought cases against some soldiers engaged in extortion and racketeering.

Extortion is illegal under Ivorian law and violates people's right to liberty of movement under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and people's right to property under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. In cases where checkpoint extortion impedes access to health care or harms food security, the government has also violated people's rights to health and food under the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

"The Ouattara government has put improving the economy at the heart of its political program, but the relentless extortion by security forces in western Côte d'Ivoire is having a devastating impact on people's livelihoods," Wells said. "Ivorian authorities need to quickly stamp out security force abuse of the very people they are supposed to protect."