

**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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Action on Armed Violence

Friday, 28 June 2013

<http://aoav.org.uk/2013/top-100-the-most-influential-people-in-the-world-of-armed-violence/>

Top 100: The most influential people in armed violence reduction

In 2011, at least 526,000 people died violent deaths around the world. Over three-quarters of these occurred in non-conflict settings. A wide range of people around the globe are working to change this depressing reality. But who are these men and women who have dedicated their lives to making the world a safer place? Members of AOAV staff have come together to select 100 people who are outstanding examples of those trying to change the world for the better.

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Brenda Hollis – Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone

Brenda Hollis is Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a court set up jointly between the UN and the Government of Sierra Leone to prosecute those most responsible for crimes committed during the civil war. In 2012 Charles Taylor became the first Head of State to be convicted for his part in war crimes. The tribunal is also notable for the role of the Government of Sierra Leone, who specifically asked the UN for help in trying those responsible.

Twitter: @specialcourt

-SNIP-

mysinchew.com

Monday, 1 July 2013

Liberian women's war wounds fester, 10 years on

by Zoom Dosso

MONROVIA, July 1, 2013 (AFP) - It is over a week since Ruth Flomo was last able to walk, the bullet lodged in her leg an agonising reminder of the terror of being shot in crossfire during Liberia's bloody civil war 10 years ago.



Flomo, then just a teenager, was caught in an exchange of fire between the rebel Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and troops loyal to ex-president Charles Taylor as the conflict was nearing an end in 2003.

"I am living with a bullet in me," the 28-year-old said, her voice gentle and supplicating, as she held the back of her scarred thigh while resting in an armchair at her home in the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

"We were fleeing when a stray bullet penetrated my right leg. I was rushed to the hospital where doctors conducted an x-ray and said that the bullet that pierced my leg was still in my flesh and was just an inch away from my bone."

The medics in the Monrovia hospital were ill-equipped to deal with gunshot wounds and had to discharge Flomo in the hope that the bullet would work its own way out. Ten years later, it regularly causes her serious pain.



"After a week in the hospital I was discharged and sent home. I was advised to keep taking antibiotics, ampicillin or penicillin, with the hope that the (bullet) would have come out but to this date it is still in me.

"Every now and then I feel pain in my leg and my entire body. I don't have the money to go to hospital to remove it. I do not have the means of paying the bill," she told AFP.

Deep psychological and physical wounds remain in Liberia after two back-to-back civil wars which ran from 1989 to 2003 and left a quarter of a million people dead.

Numerous rebel factions raped, maimed and killed, some making use of drugged-up child soldiers, and deep ethnic rivalries and bitterness remain across the west African nation of four million people.

There is no official figure for people living with poorly-treated gunshot and explosives wounds but charities estimate that Flomo is among 5,000 women and children coping with the pain of shrapnel they cannot afford to have removed.

'They did not pick up arms. They did not fight war'

Miatta Gayflor was just 12 when a bomb exploded near her as she fled a gun battle between government troops and rebels in Monrovia, sending white-hot shrapnel searing into her buttocks.

"It is sometimes difficult for me to sit. I feel rotten pain in my buttocks for at least a week every two months. The only treatment I can afford is a painkiller," the 23-year-old told AFP, breaking into sobs.

"I was not armed, my mother did not have weapons and we were only running for our lives and that is the crime we committed. I can still remember my mother holding me in her arms crying for help while I was bleeding," Gayflor said.

She and thousands like her have formed a Liberian branch of the Association of Disabled Females International to demand compensation from the government for their suffering.

"The association is about only women and children because we did not pick up arms to fight. We were harmless but we suffered most," the group's executive director, Meima Hoff, told AFP.

"We have been going from office to office to cry for help but no one has come to our rescue."

A glance at the group's membership provides a gruesome snapshot of the privations women suffered during the civil wars, with many of the activists made blind, missing limbs or suffering mental or neurological disorders.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to probe war crimes and rights abuses between 1979 and 2003, and particularly during the brutal conflicts that raged in 1989-96 and 1999-2003.

The commission said a compensation scheme should be set up alongside a war crimes court to prosecute eight ex-warlords for alleged crimes against humanity but the government is yet to implement the recommendations.

Ten years after the war, no money has been made available and the only Liberian to face trial is Charles Taylor, and that was for his role in neighbouring Sierra Leone's civil conflict, not that in his own country.

The former leader is appealing a 50-year prison sentence handed down in April last year for supporting rebels in Sierra Leone in exchange for blood diamonds during a civil war that claimed 120,000 lives between 1991 and 2001.

"It is time for all of us to fight for our rights... especially women that were made disabled because of the war. We have lots of women and children that are disabled as a result of the war in Liberia," Hoff added.

"They did not pick up arms. They did not fight war. Out of wickedness, they were made victims of the war. You see in Sierra Leone they have got their reparation. This was part of their reconciliation process.

"But since the TRC process ended in Liberia, the government has not opened that chapter. It is time for us to demand reparation for war-made victims in the country."

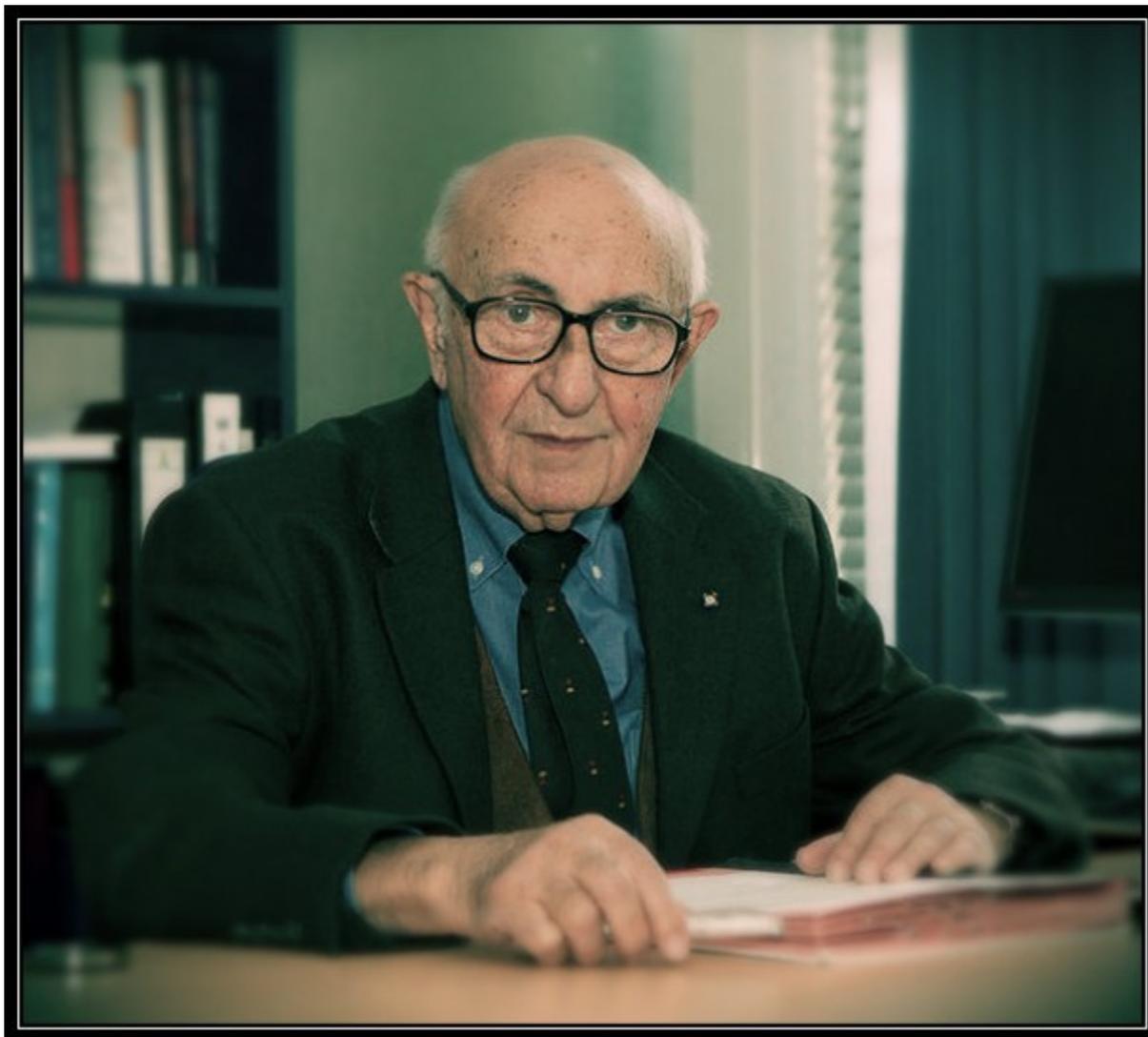
Worldcrunch.com

Monday, 1 July 2013

An American Judge Accused Of Setting War Criminals Free

After a string of acquittals by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, some accuse Judge Theodor Meron, a Polish-born American citizen, of having a political agenda.

An American Judge Accused Of Setting War Criminals Free



Meron has been the head of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia since 2011 - (ICTY) By Luis Lema
LE TEMPS/Worldcrunch

THE HAGUE - Is the authority of international justice going wobbly?

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the body responsible for trying those accused of the most atrocious crimes committed in the 1990s, has delivered several judgments recently that surprised some of its closest observers.

Over the course of a few months, six senior civil and military officials were set free, in apparent total disregard of the current legislation. Now criticism is starting to boil over, with one person is the center of attention: the ICTY presiding judge, Theodor Meron, who previously had served as Israel's ambassador to Canada and to the United Nations offices in Geneva, before emigrating to the United States, where he became a citizen and eventually a top legal advisor to the State Department.

A few days ago, Danish ICTY judge Frederik Harhoff dropped a bombshell. Following recent decisions to acquit Croatian generals, one commander and a few former Serbian intelligence chiefs, Harhoff expressed concern in what was supposed to be a confidential letter that direct pressure was being applied on the court by top Israeli and US military staff.

The recent verdicts had something in common: they absolve representatives and officers as long as they did not show “direct intent” in the crimes they committed. The Tribunal used to insist on the notion of “joint criminal enterprise” so as to take into account the people of the highest ranks. Now it appears to be focusing on simple underlings.

Meron applied the same “philosophy” in the Rwandan Tribunal in which he is the presiding judge in the appeals process. In February, two former Rwandan ministers were let go on appeal, after having been previously sentenced to 30 years of jail for participating in the carrying out of the Tutsi genocide.

According to multiple sources, Meron, 84, doesn't hesitate to highlight the fact that he is American in order to convince some colleagues looking, for instance, to get reappointed.

Other judges had previously noted their discomfort with Meron's approach, with one calling his juridical reasoning “grotesque.”

This is not the first time that Meron has been directly accused of actively mixing politics with his role as judge. A document recently unveiled by Wikileaks describes a conversation in 2003 between the judge and an American ambassador: Pierre-Richard Prosper. At the time, Swiss magistrate Carla Del Ponte was presiding at the ICTY. Meron, who didn't like the way she worked, relied on the ambassador to make sure Carla Del Ponte was not renewed at the ICTY.

It is clearly specified in the tribunal statutes that it must act independently. Reaching for political support is contrary to the most elementary principles that make the system work. This is an “absolutely unacceptable” method, claims specialist Jon Heller on the legal website *Opinio Juris*.

Human rights activists have penned a letter of outrage addressed to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Within this tribunal, created by the UN Security Council, there is no legislation to indict Theodor Meron. “In the right historical context, we would have eliminated this blind spot of immunity. But now we're trying to make that change,” says Florence Hartmann, former spokeswoman for Carla Del Ponte.

Hartmann says the surprising acquittals in the Balkans undermine any chance of reconciliation. But it is also a blow for the overall standing of international law itself: “If it's impossible to sentence the people responsible in the hierarchy, we sabotage the Geneva Conventions,” she says.

The Wall Street Journal

Monday, 1 July 2013

Chad's Former Leader Charged in Senegal Over Alleged War Crimes

Hissene Habre Lived Freely in Senegal for 22 Years Before Being Detained for Trial

By

DREW HINSHAW

DAKAR, Senegal—Senegalese prosecutors lodged charges of war crimes, torture and crimes against humanity against the former ruler of Chad, Hissene Habre, the latest African leader facing trial for alleged abuses during his time in power.

Mr. Habre has been detained and faces up to 30 years in prison if convicted, Senegal's Attorney-General El Hadj Mbacké Fall told reporters on Monday. Prosecutors say the former Chadian leader's tightly managed Secret Service killed up to 40,000 people in his 1982-90 rule.

Mr. Habre is being tried by a Senegalese court, authorized by the African Union, the first time an African head of state will be tried solely within the judicial system of another African state.

"All this is false," Mr. Habre's lawyer El Hadji Diouf said, asserting his client's innocence. Mr. Diouf called the trial a witch hunt by the government that toppled Mr. Habre.

In recent years, lawyers for international courts have succeeded in extraditing African leaders from Liberia, Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Yet for 22 years, Mr. Habre lived freely in a two-story villa in this seaside capital, according to neighbors.

"For 22 years, we've been chasing this case," said Clément Abaifouta, a former Chadian prisoner who spent four years during the Habre era crammed into a small, dirt-floored cell. Speaking via telephone, he recalled digging hundreds of graves of fellow prisoners, whom he said guards shot, starved and tortured to death.

In charging Mr. Habre, Senegal is breaking new legal ground in Africa. The Hague-based, International Criminal Court has prosecuted former African leaders. But Mr. Habre's case offers a test of whether Africa's own judges can handle a similar task.

A special court in The Hague sentenced Liberian President Charles Taylor for aiding and abetting war crimes. And the ICC is pressing similar charges against Ivory Coast's President Laurent Gbagbo and Democratic Republic of the Congo warlord Bosco Ntaganda, both of whom are in custody and say they weren't directly responsible for their followers' actions. The court has also brought charges of crimes against humanity against Kenya's recently elected President Uhuru Kenyatta, allegedly for inciting election-related violence in 2007, a charge Mr. Kenyatta, who remains free and rules in Kenya, denies.

Allegations against stretch back decades. After seizing control in 1982, Mr. Habre, a Paris-educated son of a shepherd, became a Cold War ally to the U.S., which gave him \$25 million in military aid, according to a 1998 congressional report. The aid included missiles, grenade launchers, rifles, and three 3-130a cargo planes, the report said.

Later, he turned on his rivals in Chad, said prosecutors, victims and Chad's 1992 Truth Commission. His Documentation and Security Directorate allegedly killed up to 40,000 people, reporting activities in daily portfolios delivered to the president by his nephew, according to the Truth Commission. The nephew didn't respond to the truth commission.

At night, police rounded up political enemies or ordinary people from rival ethnic groups. Those who weren't summarily shot, largely died in jail of disease and starvation, the Truth Commission said. Mr. Habre's lawyer denied those allegations.

In 1990, a rebel army moved into Chad's capital and forced Mr. Habre to flee to Senegal, where Human Rights Watch alleges he used stolen government funds to purchase political protection for himself. Mr. Habre's lawyer also denied those claims.

A Senegalese court indicted Mr. Habre in 2000, but a judge threw the case out, saying it didn't have jurisdiction. Victims turned to Belgium, which agreed to try him, but Senegal refused to extradite an African leader to Europe.

Victims then took the case to the African Union, which ordered Senegal to hold a special tribunal for Mr. Habre. But Senegal demanded an exorbitant \$100 million to fund the trial. Senegal's stance shifted after last year's election brought the less anti-Western opposition to power. It then agreed to hold the trial at a fraction of the previously demanded costs.

Meantime, President Barack Obama met Thursday with judges here, pressing Senegal to move forward with the trial.

The White House

Saturday, 29 June 2013

Remarks By President Obama and President Zuma of South Africa at Joint Press Conference

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President Zuma: On the issue of justice internationally, it's a very serious matter as viewed by the African countries. As you know, there have been cases where Africa has felt we are being treated unfairly -- because we have also had discussions as to how could we deal with justice, level the playing fields. Africa is, for example, in the process of trying to initiate an interaction with the ICC to discuss specifically those kind of issues.

Our (inaudible) in our relations with the United States, our legal people, in fact, should be given an opportunity to discuss these matters at that level as to how could we bring about equal justice globally. Because it is important that we are seen in action to be treating matters of people, that they're equal before the law. There is a view in the continent that this is not done. And it may be a subjective view, but there is that view that therefore says countries that are in the leadership should have more interaction to address those matters, because they become very much important.

One of the issues that was asked, for example, was the issue of Kenya -- what is it that must happen there. How do you look at people who are charged -- in other words, who are supposed to answer questions in court, who are not yet convicted -- how do they look like before the law?

Now, we think that the saying is that you are innocent until proven guilty, right? What is the role of the people who are not knowing the law, are not sophisticated, who are given an opportunity to vote and to exercise their vote, which is within their rights, respecting their rights? And they produce a particular verdict. What do you say in terms of the law? Those are the issues we believe need to be looked at, because there are specific circumstances at some point. Because if we are able to discuss those issues and agree, it's not going to be difficult to collaborate if there people, for an example, who must appear before in court, because it would be moving from a particular kind of understanding.

It is also important to remove the perceptions that people could have about certain things. If we don't talk, we don't engage, the perceptions then become an impediment -- whether we could move forward in bringing about equal justice, respect of the law globally, so to speak. I'm just saying, from my point of view, the interaction and the deepening of relations is going to help to deal with those matters -- of course, with people who have expertise on those kind of matters. I don't think they are matters that cannot be resolved. They will be resolved through engagement. Thank you very much.

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On the issue of international justice, it's true the United States is not a signatory, but we've been very supportive of the International Criminal Court. Obviously, it is a difficult thing. We don't have a single world government. You don't have a single world police force. And yet, I think it was created and the idea of international justice was created, for those extraordinary circumstances in which you see a leader operating in ways that is so contrary to international norms and basic beliefs that we have about the dignity of people that the international community sees the need to speak and to render judgment -- in part to prevent that kind of action from taking place in the future, in part to put leaders on notice that they can't simply act with impunity simply because they control the biggest military or the biggest faction inside

their country. That does not give them license to do whatever they please. And I think that principle is important to uphold.

I know that there's been talk about, well, does the ICC pick on Africa?

But, truthfully, probably the most high-profile work that the ICC has done actually had to do with the situation in Serbia and the Balkans, and Kosovo and Bosnia. And so I'm confident that in fact the ICC is not thinking simply regionally on these issues.

I do share with President Zuma however, the notion that if that's a perception inside of Africa, then it's useful for the African Union -- and as a disinterested organization in the sense that it's not just representing one country or one individual -- to be able to have constructive conversations with the ICC to see if some of those perceptions can be dissipated. I would caution though that you wouldn't want, in the name of African unity, to be trying to water down principles that then allow a **Charles Taylor**, let's say, to engage in the kinds of actions that he did. That was brutal and inexcusable. And to the extent that the notion was that actions like those of slaughtering people and unleashing troops to rape and pillage with impunity that somehow you can get away with that, that's not good for Africa. And the African Union should find a way, as President Zuma indicated, to allay some of these concerns, perhaps get a greater sense of consistency or transparency or clarity in terms of how the ICC is operating. But don't lose that basic sense that we're all accountable in some fashion to the basic precepts that our countries respectively are founded on.