

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



Flashback to the war: The son of Tamaboro commander Mohamed Jalloh poses for the camera at Bendugu. *From the Sierra Leone Peace Museum collection*

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:

Wednesday, 3 July 2013

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Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Human Rights Watch

Wednesday, 3 July 2013

Press Release

Guinea: High-Level Charges in 2009 Massacre

Place the Accused on Leave from Government; Protect Judges, Victims

(Nairobi, July 3, 2013) – Guinea’s domestic panel of judges investigating the country’s 2009 stadium massacre and rapes has taken a significant step in charging a high-level suspect, who is expected to be questioned by the judges on July 4, Human Rights Watch said today. Given the potential for interference with the investigation, the government should place the suspect on leave and take additional measures to protect judges, witnesses, and victims.

The suspect, Lt. Col. Claude “Coplan” Pivi, is Guinea’s minister for presidential security, a position he also held at the time of the 2009 crimes. Media reports said that Pivi was charged with murder, rape, arson, looting, destruction of buildings, and complicity. Consistent with international law, Pivi is presumed innocent unless tried and proven guilty.

“The judges took a major step for justice for the 2009 stadium massacre and rapes by filing charges against an influential, high-level official,” said Elise Keppler, senior international justice counsel with Human Rights Watch. “Now Guinean officials need to show their commitment to justice by putting Pivi on leave so he won’t be in a position to influence the investigation.”

Pivi appeared before the judges briefly on June 28, 2013, during which time they notified him that charges had been filed. Pivi is expected to appear before the judges again on July 4, for questioning.

Human Rights Watch has extensively documented the 2009 crimes and closely followed the investigation. On September 28, 2009, several hundred members of Guinea’s security forces burst into a stadium in Guinea’s capital, Conakry, and opened fire on tens of thousands of opposition supporters peacefully gathered there. By late afternoon, at least 150 Guineans lay dead or dying, and dozens of women had suffered brutal sexual violence, including individual and gang rape.

Human Rights Watch, a United Nations-supported International Commission of Inquiry, and other independent human rights organizations identified Pivi as someone whose possible role in the crimes should be investigated.

“The sensitive nature of charging such a high-ranking officer brings increased risk for judges, witnesses, and victims alike,” Keppler said. “The Guinean authorities need to ensure the judges, witnesses, and victims are protected against threats.”

The panel of judges has made important progress in the investigation. They have interviewed more than 200 victims and charged at least 8 people, including Pivi and other high-ranking military officers.

Others charged include Guinea’s minister in charge of fighting drug trafficking and organized crime, Col. Moussa Tiégboro Camara, and Col. Abdoulaye Chérif Diaby, the health minister at the time. Another key suspect the judges have charged, Lt. Abubakar “Toumba” Diakité, remains at large.

However, the investigation has been plagued by lack of material support and concerns about security for the judges. The investigation has yet to be completed nearly four years later. Some suspects have already been in pretrial detention longer than the two years permitted by Guinean law.

Human Rights Watch, in December 2012, identified several key benchmarks the Guinean government should meet to support the panel to complete its investigation. They include ensuring the judges have adequate resources and security; establishing a witness and victim protection program; and resolving a two-year-old request to the government of Burkina Faso to interview Guinea's former president, Dadis Camara, who is living in that country.

The report also urged the government to place suspects on leave from government posts – namely Col. Moussa Tiégboro Camara and Lieutenant Colonel Pivi – where there is a risk they could interfere with the investigation. This is especially important given the prominent role members of the military have played in Guinean society.

On October 14, 2009, the International Criminal Court (ICC) Office of the Prosecutor confirmed that the situation in Guinea was under preliminary examination – a step that may or may not lead to the opening of an investigation. The ICC has closely monitored the situation and played a pivotal role in keeping accountability on the government's agenda, and fostering progress by regularly visiting Guinea and talking with the local media.

“Victims in Guinea are desperate to see justice for the heinous crimes of September 28, 2009, and the days immediately following,” Keppler said. “Fair investigation and prosecution are essential to bring redress to the victims and to signal a definitive end to longstanding impunity for abuses by members of the security services.”

BBC

Tuesday, 2 July 2013

Chad ex-leader Habre charged in Senegal with war crimes



Chad's then-President Hissene Habre, in 1987 Hissene Habre has lived a quiet life in Dakar for more than 20 years

Chad's ex-President Hissene Habre has been charged in Senegal with war crimes, crimes against humanity and torture by a special court.

The 70 year old, who was arrested on Sunday in the Senegalese capital, Dakar, denies killing and torturing tens of thousands of his opponents.

He fled to Senegal when he was deposed after eight years in power in 1990.

Last year, the UN's International Court of Justice ordered Senegal to put him on trial or extradite him.

Mr Habre appeared before a special court set up in Senegal to investigate the allegations. He will remain in custody pending the trial.

Analysts say the case would be a milestone for African justice - representing the first time an African leader has been tried in a fellow African country on charges of crimes against humanity.

'Africa's Pinochet'

The Senegalese authorities and the African Union had for years failed to make a decision on his fate despite pressure from human rights groups.

Mr Habre and his wife kept a low profile in Dakar, where he lived in relative freedom despite being put under house arrest in 2005 - guarded by two security agents.

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 BBC's Thomas Fessy in Dakar says the official investigation will take up to 15 months before a trial can start.

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

Jacqueline Moudeina, a lawyer for some of his alleged victims, told the BBC that the move came as a relief to her clients who had been seeking justice for years.

Mr Habre's lawyer El-Hadji Diouf told the BBC he remained confident the truth would eventually emerge and Mr Habre would be discharged.

The former Chadian president 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.

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.

Agence France-Presse

Tuesday, 2 July 2013

Karadzic, Mladic hold key to ICTY's credibility

By Nicolas Delaunay/The Hague

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which saw some of its powers transferred to a new body in The Hague on Monday, has come under fire for a series of recent acquittals. But analysts say it will be future judgments on Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his army chief Ratko Mladic that will leave the longest lasting impression of the court in the minds of the public. In a rare and ferocious critique, one of the tribunal's own judges said the recent acquittal of two Croatian generals and three high-profile Serbs set an entirely new legal precedent.

Frederik Harhoff sent a letter to the president of the court, American Theodor Meron, leaked to the Danish press in June, accusing him of establishing a legal precedent in the interests of a "military elite of prominent countries", including Israel and the US.

Harhoff further claimed that Meron had pressured other judges to acquit the officers, possibly under pressure from the US.

The acquittals would mean that the highest-ranking officers were not automatically responsible for crimes committed by their subordinates, he said, adding wryly, "The American and Israeli military chiefs must be breathing a sigh of relief".

But according to Goran Sluiter, professor of international law at the University of Amsterdam, the court is still a respected source of authority, regardless of its recent decisions.

"Despite the recent debates, the ICTY remains the benchmark of international courts, because it has succeeded where all others have failed," he said, referring to the indictment of 161 suspects since 1993 for serious violations of international humanitarian law in the former republic, a feat achieved by no other tribunal.

Contacted by AFP, Meron refused to comment on the damning claims made by his fellow judge. The court's chief prosecutor Serge Brammertz questioned whether the president's continued silence on the issue was helping an already tense situation.

"I would personally consider that, in a world where communication is so important, not reacting at all to criticism was perhaps not the best way to respond," he said in an interview with AFP.

"Any form of criticism must be seen in a constructive way and become a topic for a debate," he added. Without wishing to comment directly on the Harhoff letter, he would only say that the disputes triggered by the acquittals had "surely not helped" the credibility of the tribunal.

Brammertz has said he "shared the disappointment" of victims, and had lodged an appeal to overturn the May 30 acquittals of two Serbian intelligence chiefs Jovica Stanisic and Franko Simatovic, who were accused of war crimes.

Furthermore, the cases of Mladic and Karadzic could not be compared with those of Yugoslavian army chief Momcilo Perisic, Stanisic and Simatovic, added Brammertz, as they were implicated directly in crimes in Bosnia rather than aiding and abetting from Belgrade.

But experts were confident the trials of Karadzic and Mladic would be foremost in the public consciousness as the court hands the cases to the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT), which is tasked with continuing the judicial process and maintaining the tribunal's legacy. Christophe Paulussen, a senior researcher in international criminal law at the Asser Institute in The Hague, said that although the recent debate could be damaging if judges were seen to have lost their impartiality, "this episode only concerns a very short period in the history of the tribunal".

Sluiter was more direct. "I don't think that history will remember this," he said.

"I think people will remember the judgements of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, for whom the outcome is relatively predictable." - AFP