

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



Flowers at the Special Court

**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, 9 October 2013

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
Martin Royston-Wright  
Ext 7217

### Local News

Ahead of African Union Meeting... / *Concord Times* Page 3

### International News

Isabelle Bourgeault-Tassé: Guns and Gems / *Ottawa Citizen* Page 4

If Liberia's President Charles Taylor is a War Criminal... / *Global Research* Page 5

Rwanda Denies M23 Child Soldier Claims as 'Ludicrous' / *BBC* Page 6

A Global Call for Victims' Rights to Be Upheld in Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina / *PR Web* Pages 7-8

Ruinous Rivalries / *The Daily Star* Pages 9-10

Judgment Today / *The Daily Star* Pages 11-12

## LOCAL NEWS

### Ahead of African Union meeting...

#### CARL urges Sierra Leone, African ICC members to stay

The Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL) has joined more than hundred civil society organizations across Africa to urge state parties to the Rome Statute to affirm their support for the International Criminal Court. The move comes in the wake calls for African members of the Court to withdraw en mass, and ahead of a crucial extraordinary summit of the African Union (AU) slated for 11 and 12 October, in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, where the main agenda would be Africa's membership in the ICC.

The rights groups from 34 countries urged African countries to support the ICC as "a crucial court of last resort, including for its current cases on crimes committed during Kenya's post-election violence in 2007-2008."

The relationship between The Hague-based court and some African governments has been fractious, following the trial of both President Uhuru Kenyatta and his vice, William Ruto, for their part in the violence which erupted after disputed presidential elections in Kenya in

2008. About 600 persons were butchered, while thousands more fled their homes in ethnic killings.

Also, the Court has indicted the Sudanese president, Umar Al-Bashir, and former Ivorian president, Laurent Gbagbo and wife, Simone Gbagbo.

These developments have led to increased accusations that the court is targeting African leaders, a key reason many African ICC members have posited for wanting to withdraw from the Rome Statute, which established the ICC.

"A mass withdrawal by AU member states from the ICC would represent a major setback for global efforts at promoting accountability for perpetrators of serious international crimes. African leaders have recently demonstrated a remarkable commitment to combat impunity for serious crimes on the continent. A blanket support for calls by Kenya and its allies for African states to withdraw from the ICC would undermine its current international reputation," said Ibrahim Tommy, Executive Director of CARL.

According to Tommy, the government of Sierra Leone and West Africa governments must bring their influence to bear in preventing a mass African withdrawal from a process that guarantees an end to impunity.

"Sierra Leone and other ECOWAS members should press the AU to work to expand the reach of justice, not undermine it," he said.

While not averse to calls for the ICC to improve on its modus operandi, as it is not beyond scrutiny and improvement, the CARL release states that "withdrawal would risk grave consequences of undermining justice in Africa."

The release underscored that African countries played an active role at the negotiations which established the ICC, while 34 African countries, many of whom are African Union members, are state parties to the Rome Statute.

Also, the release reminded African governments that the continent has benefitted immensely from the Court, as many have called on the court to try grave crimes committed on their territories, while Africans are among the highest-level ICC officials, including judges and the current prosecutor, Gambian Fatou Ben Souda.

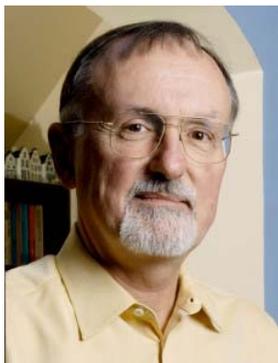
Ottawa Citizen  
Friday, 4 October 2013

## Isabelle Bourgeault-Tassé: Guns and gems

*Isabelle Bourgeault-Tassé*

“Ian Smillie is lying through his teeth.”

With these words, former warlord and Liberian President Charles Taylor denounced the man who would implicate him in Liberia and Sierra Leone’s illicit diamond trade.



In Taylor’s hands, Sierra Leone’s sparkling baubles fueled a litany of horrific human rights abuses ranging from rape, torture, and recruitment of child soldiers. And in the diamond mines of Sierra Leone, his violent calling card: fingers, hands, feet, and ears, even those of babies, cut off by rebel soldiers.

Found guilty in 2012, Charles Taylor’s conviction was upheld last week by the Special Court for Sierra Leone’s Appeal Chamber, again shining the media spotlight on the diamond industry.

Canadian Ian Smillie would be the first witness to testify at Charles Taylor’s trial in The Hague, a trial that included other noted – and reluctant – witnesses such as model Naomi Campbell and actress Mia Farrow.

For the last 15 years, Smillie has worked on the frontlines of the conflict and blood diamond trade, from ‘the jungles of West Africa to the backstreets of Antwerp and a war crimes tribunal in The Hague.’ A teacher, author of seminal works on blood diamonds such as the upcoming book *Diamonds* (Polity, Cambridge), and Liberian ‘enemy of the state,’ Smillie was also one of the architects of the Kimberley Process, a certification scheme that sought to eradicate the sale and trade of conflict diamonds.

In an interview with Ramp1885, Ian Smillie talks blood and conflict diamonds – what it takes for a diamond to make it from the mine to a ringed finger, what happened when he came face to face with Charles Taylor, what he thought of Naomi Campbell’s testimony at The Hague, and how to buy “clean” diamonds.

*Isabelle Bourgeault-Tassé is a writer, budding world traveler, and explorer of the ateliers of fashion artisans around the world. She tweets @Isabelle\_BT and blogs at [isabellebourgeault-tasse.tumblr.com](http://isabellebourgeault-tasse.tumblr.com).*

## Global Research

Saturday, 5 October 2013

<http://www.globalresearch.ca>

### **If Liberia's President Charles Taylor is a War Criminal, Then So are Obama, Bush and Clinton**

“Whereas Liberian president Charles Taylor was accused of encouraging the slaughter of possibly 50,000 people in Sierra Leone, Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton have armed, financed and protected the killers of six million people – 120 times as many fatalities – in the eastern Congo.”

Last year, former Liberian president Charles Taylor became the first former head of state ever to be convicted by an international tribunal. Taylor, whose 60-year prison sentence was upheld, last week, was found guilty of war crimes – not in his own country, but in neighboring Sierra Leone, where a civil war had raged from 1991 to 2002. The Liberian president wasn't accused of personally committing mass murder in Sierra Leone, or even of having ordered that these crimes be committed. Instead, the prosecution argued that he had “instigated” others to commit the crimes in order to profit from the sale of what became known as “blood diamonds.” The court reasoned that Taylor must have known about the horrendous crimes that were being perpetrated by his friends among the rebels in the neighboring country, and was, therefore, as guilty as they were.

If that is the new standard for international criminal law, then Barack Obama and the two other living U.S. presidents should soon be moving into prison cells next door to Charles Taylor. These three U.S. presidents have instigated – with full knowledge of the consequences – 17 years of the most ghastly crimes imaginable in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Whereas Liberian president Charles Taylor was accused of encouraging the slaughter of possibly 50,000 people in Sierra Leone, Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton have armed, financed and protected the killers of six million people – 120 times as many fatalities – in the eastern Congo, where American allies Rwanda and Uganda have been on a rampage of looting and mass murder since 1996.

Charles Taylor's motive was said to be personal gain from the blood diamond trade – although international investigators have never found his alleged hidden treasure. The United States let loose its Rwandan and Ugandan dogs of war for a much bigger prize: the world's largest deposits of strategic minerals that are required for maintenance of modern industries and war machines. Charles Taylor's stash of ill-gotten cash may be fictional, but the flow of Congolese coltan and other strategic minerals through Rwandan and Ugandan military middlemen to the rich countries of the West is undeniable. Charles Taylor's crimes in Sierra Leone – if he is guilty – pale in comparison to those of U.S. presidents in the Congo, where Clinton, Bush and Obama have instigated, encouraged and collaborated in the worst genocide since World War Two. And, just like common criminals, they tried to hide the evidence – suppressing United Nations reports, preventing discussion of Congo's complaints before the World Body, and flooding the corporate media with propaganda that Rwanda and Uganda's leaders are the most honorable men in Africa – when, in fact, they are the continent's most coddled thieves and killers.

Of course, the United States will never submit to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court; its presidents cannot measure up to anyone's standard of justice. They live by the law of the gun – the greatest war criminals on planet Earth.

BBC

Monday, 7 October 2013

### Rwanda denies M23 child soldier claims as 'ludicrous'



M23 fighters launched a rebellion last May, forcing 800,000 from their homes

Rwanda has strongly rejected allegations that it is helping train child soldiers for rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Speaking to the BBC, Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo described such claims as "ludicrous".

The US has recently withdrawn military aid to Rwanda, saying it is backing the M23 rebels, believed to recruit minors.

The M23 rebellion has forced tens of thousands from their homes in the eastern DR Congo.

"The idea that Rwanda is associated with child soldiers is just ludicrous," Ms Mushikiwabo told the BBC's Newsday programme.

"We have worked with a number of UN agencies... to basically make sure that children don't belong in the army".

The US has had close military ties with Rwanda since President Paul Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) came to power after the end of the 1994 genocide.

Rwanda has been accused of backing the M23, which is led by ethnic Tutsis.

Rwanda has twice invaded DR Congo, which says it wants to stop ethnic Hutu rebel groups based there from attacking its territory.

President Kagame, a Tutsi, led the RPF when it ended the genocide in which some 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus died

## PR Web

Wednesday, 9 October 2013

### A Global Call for Victims' Rights to Be Upheld in Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Leading world experts on truth-seeking and memorialization, including ICTJ President David Tolbert, have called on the mayor of Prijedor, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to publicly acknowledge and memorialize non-Serb victims of atrocities committed in the city in the early 1990s.



*Forensic experts exhuming the Tomasica mass grave, where dozens of bodies of Bosnian civilians from Prijedor are believed to have been buried by Bosnian Serb forces. Photo by Samir Sinanovic*

“Prijedor holds a particular place in the world’s topography of mass atrocities, as more than 3,000 of its citizens were killed or disappeared in 1992, during the early months of the Bosnian war.”

New York, NY (PRWEB) October 09, 2013

A group of leading world experts on truth-seeking and memorialization has called for the mayor of Prijedor, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to publicly acknowledge and memorialize the non-Serb victims of atrocities committed in the city in the early 1990s.

The call comes after another mass grave(\*) was discovered near Prijedor that is likely to contain the bodies of some of the estimated 1,200 civilians still missing after being held at one of the area’s notorious detention camps run by Bosnian Serb forces in 1992.

Co-signers of the letter include the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez; president of the International Center for Transitional Justice, David Tolbert; executive director of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, Elizabeth Silkes; and leading activists on the right to truth and memorialization from Argentina, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Peru, and South Africa.

Prijedor holds a particular place in the world’s topography of mass atrocities, as more than 3,000 citizens of this city and municipality in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina were killed or disappeared in 1992, during the early months of the Bosnian war.

The images of emaciated prisoners of notorious camps of Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje shocked the world, after Radovan Karadžić’s Bosnian Serb forces gained control of Prijedor in April 1992 and directed a well-organized campaign of “ethnic cleansing” (\*\*) against Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croat residents in the area.

The brutal crimes committed in Prijedor have been thoroughly documented in trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and in Bosnian courts. More than 30 persons, including the town's former mayor (§) and camp commanders (§), have been convicted of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

However, twenty years on, Prijedor's municipal government, led by Mayor Marko Pavic, refuses to memorialize the suffering of non-Serb citizens of Prijedor, while at the same time building numerous memorials to Serb combatants who died in the conflict.

In the letter sent to Mayor Pavic and various institutions, including the United Nations Secretary General, the Bosnian government, European Union representatives, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the group of notable human rights advocates calls on the Prijedor administration to "uphold victims' universally recognized right to the truth, which encompasses the basic right to grieve and honor their dead."

The letter asks for Mayor Pavic to take immediate and effective steps to:

- Initiate the building of a memorial to non-Serb victims in Prijedor, designed and built in consultation with victims and survivors.
- Allow the construction of a memorial to the victims of the Omarska detention camp, designed and built in consultation with victims and survivors, and in cooperation with Arcelor Mittal, the corporation that currently owns the site.
- Encourage accurate, constructive, and peaceful public education about the events of 1992-1995, and to withdraw any measure that targets victims' associations and human rights activists in Prijedor for exercising their freedom of expression.

The letter concludes: "The discovery of a mass grave in Tomasica once again illustrates the dimensions of suffering endured by the citizens of Prijedor in the 1990s. The remains exhumed from its mass graves speak the difficult truth about atrocities and leave no room for denial."

"We invite you, as Mayor of Prijedor, to rise above narrow ethnic and political agendas and reach out to your city's most vulnerable citizens – victims' families."

**Ruinous rivalries**

File - Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati looks on during an interview with Journalist Marcel Ghanem, unseen, at the Grand Serail in Beirut, Lebanon, Thursday, Nov. 24, 2011. (Mohammad Azakir/The Daily Star)

Once again, Lebanon's 49 percent share of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon funding is due. And once again, the procedure – which should be a simple, if expensive, international legal matter – has fallen victim to domestic political squabbling and infighting.

Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati might still decide to seek Cabinet approval to pay Lebanon's 2013 dues, but in the absence of a government, this might take time. But it has been paid without Cabinet approval before, so there no reason this cannot happen again.

Those opponents of funding the court, and of the STL in general, namely Hezbollah and its March 8 allies, are using the Cabinet issue as one reason why Lebanon's 2013 dues cannot be paid. They are also citing the admittedly dire financial state of the country, and the rapidly rising costs of hosting a growing refugee population.

Eight years after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri – an event larger than Lebanon itself, and thus requiring the investigative backing of an international court – and the procedures and funding of the STL should be routine. But still they are subject to the dangerous political bickering that is increasingly appearing to define Lebanon.

For its part, Hezbollah has shown little to no cooperation with the court: consistently opposing its funding, preventing access and refusing to hand over four of its members, indicted in the 2005 crime. And as the years go on, justice seems to be ever further away. A series of different prosecutors has lengthened every proceeding, and the mechanics of the trial itself seem eternally hazy.

But for such a crucial time for Lebanon, when it needs all the international support it can get, it is vital that all of its political actors work together to help create an image of a strong, united country, not one beset by endless disagreements and crisis after crisis.

Any country is judged by its dealings with the international community, its ability to play by the rules and to work alongside and respect global norms and systems of justice. With these endless delays and bargaining over the STL, used by political parties in attempt to score minor, perceived victories at home, Lebanon is being tarnished. And not just the reputation of those groups responsible for the delays and the bickering, but all groups, and all of its citizens. For the country comes to be seen as a failed state, one not worthy of concerted efforts to maintain stability or provide assistance to. If the country cannot look after itself, the international community will likely be more inclined to ask, “Why should we help it out?”

Personal and political vendettas must be removed from all Lebanese dealings with the STL. For the country cannot – at this very delicate time – afford to pick and choose in its relations with international standards and systems.

The Daily Star  
Wednesday, 9 October 2013

## Judgment today

Staff Correspondent



Abdul Alim

A tribunal is set to deliver today its verdict in the war crimes case against former BNP minister Abdul Alim, who was allegedly involved in killing Bangalees, especially Hindus and freedom fighters, during the 1971 Liberation War.

Alim faces 17 charges of crimes against humanity and genocide. According to the charges, he participated in the killing of as many as 600 people and was also involved in looting, arson, deportation and detention of unarmed civilians. He was the chairman of Joypurhat Peace Committee and a leader of Razakar Bahini.

He and his accomplices attacked predominantly Hindu villages of Karai Kadipur, Chawkpara, Sonarpara, Palpara and Munshipara in Joypurhat on April 26, 1971. They were accompanied by the Pakistan occupation army, reads one charge.

They damaged properties of the Hindus, looted valuables and set houses on fire in those villages. They dragged some 370 people out of their homes, lined them up and shot them dead.

Alim and his men slit 90-year-old Kanchira Mohanta's throat and buried Aswini Kumar Debnath alive. Accompanied by Pakistan army Major Afzal and other soldiers, he held a meeting at Uttarhat Shahor under Khetlal and delivered a provocative speech in May 1971, says another charge.

Following the speech, members of the Peace Committee and the Razakar force along with the Pakistan army attacked the Hindu-dominant neighborhoods of Uttarhat Shahor, Harunjahat and other adjacent areas and held 10 Hindus who were later killed on Alim's orders.

A member of late president Ziaur Rahman's cabinet, Alim, had been on conditional bail since March 31, 2011, four days after his arrest, on health grounds. On September 22, as the case proceedings ended, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 cancelled the 83-year-old politician's bail and sent him to jail.

The prosecution produced 35 witnesses, including the investigation officer of the case, and submitted a number of documents to prove Alim's involvement in war crimes.

The defence produced three witnesses, including Alim's son, and several documents to prove their client's

alibi that he had been hiding during the Liberation War.

Wrapping up the closing arguments, the prosecution sought death penalty for Alim, a three-time lawmaker from the BNP, claiming that they had proved the charges against the accused beyond any shadow of reasonable doubt.

On the other hand, Alim pleaded not guilty and the defence said the prosecution could not prove any charge brought against him and sought his acquittal on all charges.

Within 17 days of the completion of the case proceedings, Justice Obaidul Hassan, chairman of ICT-2, yesterday declared the date of the verdict's delivery. This is the shortest time taken for disposing of a war crimes case. The second lowest time was 18 days in the case against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah.

The judgment on Alim will be the eighth by the International Crimes Tribunal since its establishment in March 2010.

AKM Nasiruddin Mahmud, registrar of the tribunal, told The Daily Star that security at the tribunal would be beefed up as had been done prior to the delivery of the previous verdicts.

### **ALIM'S BACKGROUND**

Born on November 1, 1930 in West Bengal of India, Alim with his family migrated to Joypurhat in 1950-51. In 1958, he joined the Muslim League. He was a top leader of the Convention Muslim League and vice-chairman of Bogra District Council in 1971, according to the prosecution.

Alim allegedly established a peace committee office and a training centre for Razakars and arranged accommodation for Pakistani Major Afzal, occupying the Gadi Ghar (trading office) of Shownlal Bajla of Joypurhat. Shownlal and his family members had been compelled to go to India.

After independence, Alim was put in jail under the Collaborators Act-1972. But when Ziaur Rahman took over the helm of the country, he made Alim a minister in 1978.

Alim also joined Zia's newly-formed BNP at that time. He was elected lawmaker from Joypurhat in the 1979, 1996 and 2001 elections, according to defence and prosecution documents.

The agency designated to probe war crimes began the investigation into the allegations against Alim in March 2011 and submitted a report to the prosecution in January 2012.

Sazzad bin Alim, son of Abdul Alim, yesterday said the accused was undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University for complications in his lungs.