

**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

as at:

Monday, 23 December 2013

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Outreach and Public Affairs

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The Spectator (Online)
Wednesday, 18 December 2013

AFRC, RUF, CDF Writes President Koroma



His Excellency
President Ernest Bai Koroma
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
State House
State Avenue
Freetown
Sierra Leone.
25th May, 2013.

Your Excellency sir,

Letter of Appeal

We have the honour to present you our honest and sincere compliments and to humbly say, thank you your Excellency, for consolidating the peace and promoting genuine National Reconciliation in our beloved country, Sierra Leone.

May almighty God bless you and your family, May he continues to guide and protect you too.

The Lome Peace Accord put in place the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for all Sierra Leoneans to speak nothing but the truth, as the truth is only the vessel that will accommodate us as a people of a Nation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was meant to consolidate the peace “ we the convicts have earnestly given to the people of Sierra Leone” and to promote National Reconciliation, forgiveness and love and to create a conducive environment for all Sierra Leoneans to live as one family, plan as one family think as one family for the total development of our beloved country, Sierra Leone. It was our ardent desire to appear and testify before the TRC which was and is still the only legitimate body

the Lome Accord, (the pivotal of the peace) empowered to peacefully resolve the conflict with no winner no loser basic. But our arrest and detention by this strange creature (Special Court) thwarted our efforts;

The Special Court arrested and tried us under international and Sierra Leonean laws. We served six and half years in Special Court jail and the trial proceedings were conducted under a quiet and peaceful atmosphere for six and half years in Sierra Leone.

The Special Court did not at any given time discuss our transfer to Rwanda with us. The Special Court Registrar, Mrs Binta Mansaray held a meeting with us on the 27th October 2009 was to inform us about our transfer to Rwanda prison from Sierra Leone. After the Registrar and her staff had finished addressing us, we raised the following concerns:

1. That, Sierra Leone did not have a diplomatic relation with Rwanda should there be any ill- treatment where do we complain when Sierra Leone does not have a Consular or Embassy in Rwanda.
2. That, we do not know the minimum prison term in Rwanda.
3. That, Rwanda is not an English speaking country
4. That, there is language barrier,
5. That, taking us, to Rwanda will simply make us stateless people and is against our constitutional and fundamental rights.
6. That, quality medical services should be priority,
7. That, quality food especially West African food should be a priority.
8. That our family link should be established and allow four to five family visits in a year.
9. That , what security guarantee they put in place with Rwanda still involved in surrogate war with the intarehamwe Hutu militia in neighbouring countries.
10. That , what will happen should evidence of inducement of witnesses, miscarriage of justice review of sentences and other related legal issues come up while in Rwanda.
11. That, the studies and vocational courses will continue.

The Registrar and staff gave us a booklet entitled: Special Court Prisoner Hand book'' The Registrar and her staff deceived us, They pointed to the below address in the Special Court Prisoner Handbook:
Ethiopia

Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone
Jumma Road
Woreda 23, Kebele 12, house No. 002
P.O Box 5619
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telephone: + 251 171 0033
Fax: + 251 171 1911.
E, mail: sleon.et@tekecom.net.et

We have tried the telephone number over and over but, cannot go through. We do not have access to fax and email. The Registrar and staff informed us that the Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone in Ethiopia is the designate Consular Representative in charge of our interest and will be visiting us in Rwanda. The Consular Representative has never visited us in Rwanda since they brought us here in 2009. ''When contacted by our families as he was on holiday in Freetown sometime in 20011. He told them that such assignment was never given to him by the Government as Ambassador''

The Registrar, Mrs Binta Mansaray and her staff informed us that Rwanda has a very good Human rights records, a decent prison facility to house any international prisoner and Rwanda Prison officers are trained and qualified to handle international prisoners.

On Tuesday, the 4th October 2011 the SCSL Principal Defender , Mrs. Clarie Carlton Hanciles brought Mr Foday Ishmael Kamara of the Sierra Leone National Prison who, was on secondment at the Special Court detention to train the Rwandan prison officers/ warders assigned at the Mpanga prison on Human rights and oh how to deal with international prisoners, Mrs. Claire Carlton Hanciles also informed us that the Special Court had sent for the former Special Court Chief of Detention, ‘‘a Canadian called’’ Mr. Raymond Cardinal to join Mr, Foday Ishmael Kamara to train the Mpanga prison officers / warders about Human Rights.

We are completely surprised to learn that it is now they are coming to train the Rwanda about human rights.

Mr. Raymond Cardinal handcuffed and shoved us into United Nations helicopter at 14: 00 hours of the 31st of October 2009, and whisked us to Lungi International Airport . Mr. Raymond Cardinal again shoved us into a waiting United Nations Airplane’’ Canadian Royal Jet’’ and we took off from Lungi still in handcuffs.

After a long flight we appealed to, Mr. Raymond Cardinal to free one hand each from the handcuffs as we still have long flight and the weather was cloudy. Mr. Raymond Cardinal refused to release the handcuffs and said, ‘‘We are rejected and banished people and nobody will query him if anything happen to us. This is the same Raymond Cardinal Special Court had hired to come and take over our welfare. Since Raymond Cardinal took over as the Chief of Detention in late 2006 to 2009. He only visited us three times at the Detention in three years. Raymond Cardinal is an Ex-policeman, he is a racist and he does not know anything about human rights and prison work. We have been made guinea legal pig.

Everything about our rights are being trampled upon by the Rwandan Prison Authorities. Sometimes we go without drinking water for days. We go without toiletries for weeks. Medical facility is absolutely zero. The food is sometimes not edible for human consumption. West Africa food is nowhere to be found. The only International Standard so far seen is the big painted building Special Court paid to hastily complete for our transfer. International Standard does not only mean big painted building . International standard also mean quality food, quality medical services, respect for human dignity and concerns and to address those views, concerns and other sensitive welfare issues of the prisoners.

The Rwandan Government is using our presence in Rwanda to advocate for the transfer of their citizens standing trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania. With the experience we going through , we are afraid, what will happen to us if these people used our presence in their custody and get their citizens to serve sentence here in Rwanda? Simple, we will be in more grave danger.

This is our present fear and concern. Sierra Leone does not have an Embassy or Consular in Rwanda where to turn to should we experience ill- treatment as we are experiencing right now. It is sad to inform you Your Excellency that, we cannot reach the Consular in Ethiopia through the telephone number the Registrar and her staff gave to us in the 27th October 2009 meeting.

We wish to respectfully and humbly appeal to you and your Government to withdraw us from Rwanda Prison and allow us to serve our respective Special Court jail-sentences in our beloved country where we

were tried and served six and half years in a quiet and peaceful Special Court custody. The Special Court country, Sierra Leone. The special court Outreach was a strong component of the Special Court prosecution and was financed by the Special Court Registrar to induce witnesses for prosecution.

We used to forward all our complains to both the SCSL Registrar and Principal Defender for action but they paid little or no attention at all. Whenever we complained about issues affecting us the Commissioner General of the Rwandan National Prison Services will come in that vexatious mood and say' "Stop insulting my Government, my government is not a subordinate to the Special Court."

Your Excellency sir, you may have heard many unkind things about us, and a devilish portrayal of our individual person as arrogant and violent. Your Excellency sir, this is simply not true.

We take this opportunity to genuinely renew to your Excellency and your Government our total commitment to the peace and reconciliation process in Sierra Leone and to appeal to your Excellency to withdraw us from Rwanda and to serve our sentences in Sierra Leone. We are really suffering. The suffering is really unbearable. Our life is in complete danger. We can no longer withstand the situation in Rwanda.

We as your citizens are looking up to your Excellency's timely intervention into this burning issue.

Yours faithfully

Issa Hassan Sesay
Augustine Ato Bao
Moinina Fofanah
Santigie Bobor Khanu
Alex Tamba Brimah
Ibrahim Bazy Kamara
Morris Hassah Kallon
Alieu Musa Kondewai

The Spectator (Online)

Thursday, 19 December 2013

AFRC, RUF, CDF Convicts on Hunger Strike

Ibrahim Samura



War crimes convicts serving jail terms in the Mpanga prison in Rwanda are on hunger strike for 13 days now.

Rwanda sources say Issa Hassan Sesay, Augustine Ato Bao, Moinina Fofanah, Santigie Borbor Khanu aka 55, Alex Tamba Brimah aka Gullit, Ibrahim Bazy Kamara, Morris Hassan Kallon and Allieu Musa Kondewai (AFRC, RUF and CDF war crimes prisoners) have correspondingly gone on hunger strike following ill-treatment meted them by Rwanda Mpanga's prison wards.

Our findings are that the prisoners have not been getting quality medical services, quality food, in particular West African type; extreme language barrier and that Sierra Leone did not have a diplomatic relation with Rwanda to enable them complain in the event of any ill-treatment against their persons. That issues stated above, we are told, were agreed upon between all the prisoners and the registrar of then Special Court For Sierra Leone Mrs. Binta Mansaray, in a meeting held on 27th October 2009, preceding their transfer to Rwanda.

It is revealed that the registrar even gave them a Special Court Prisoner Hand book into which the address "Ethiopia, Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Jumma Road Woreda 23, Kebele 12, house No. 002, P.O Box 5619 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, telephone +2511710033, fax +2511711911, email: aleon.et@telecom.net.et, was stated as their immediate point of call to discuss issues of concern. That efforts reaching the stated addresses as above proved regrettably negative.

Unconfirmed information have it also that the prisoners have had the Commissioner General of the Rwandan National Prison Services always angry with them each time they complain of ill-treatment.

As according to them, he has always accused them saying, “stop insulting my government, after all my government is not a subordinate to the Special Court.”

This, our findings revealed, has seen them treated badly by the prison wards with to one to talk for them or complained to.

The hunger strike, it is reported, has left all the Sierra Leonean war crimes prisoners in a somewhat debilitating state, that if not addressed will lead to something negative.

To this also, have seen them write a letter to President Koroma asking him lobby United Nations relocate them to Sierra Leone, where they believe they can serve their jail terms in a more comfortable and hygienic manner.

Leadership (Nigeria)

Monday, 23 December 2013

Executive Spent N4trn Service Wide Votes Without Approval– Reps

By: Adesuwa Tsan

-SNIP-

For instance between 2004 and 2012, a total sum of N1, 284,853,731.20 was spent on publicity and publication of various government programmes; between 2004 and 2005 the sum of N250million* was spent on the upkeep of the former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, another sum of N14,006,494.847.57 was also released from the Service Wide Vote for the payment of judgement debts against the federal government,” he stated.

-SNIP-

*\$1,569,750

Reuters

Friday, 20 December 2013

Panel points to international court failings in sex abuse allegations

Sexual assaults allegedly committed by an International Criminal Court staffer working in the Democratic Republic of Congo were made possible in part by serious management failings at the court, an independent panel said on Friday.

The review panel said the alleged crimes had been committed over a prolonged period by a member of staff in the court's victims and witnesses unit, whose responsibilities included protecting those who testify in court from reprisals.

The allegations are another embarrassing blow to the court, which has seen its attempts to administer justice stumble over its heavy reliance on witness testimony. The court has dealt with six cases from the DRC, four of which are still active.

The court made public the allegations in April, saying they had been made by four alleged victims of the staff member. It launched an internal inquiry and also requested the external review that reported on Friday.

Some officials at the court have already been disciplined as a result of the management failings, the court said in a statement. The review said other managers responsible were no longer working for the victims unit.

The court's lack of forensic expertise has meant its investigations have been strongly dependent on witness testimony, gathered by large field teams.

The review, chaired by **Brenda Hollis**, who led the successful international prosecution of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, criticized a recruitment process at the court which the panel said appeared to be "based on friendship" and had placed inexperienced people in positions of responsibility.

The panel also found that staff at the court's headquarters in The Hague had failed to recognize the seriousness of the allegations at the time, and said there had been "a reluctance to take ownership" of the case.

The ICC said it was assisting the authorities in the DRC with their investigation of the alleged assaults.

(Reporting By Thomas Escritt; Editing by Rosalind Russell)

Capital FM (Kenya)

Saturday, 21 December 2013

ICC Staff Dismissed Over DRC Sexual Abuses

By Judie Kaberia

Nairobi — The International Criminal Court has dismissed several staff working in the Democratic Republic of Congo for inappropriate conduct following sexual assault allegations.

ICC Registrar **Herman von Hebel** after receiving a report of the review panel set to investigate allegations of sexual assault of individuals under the ICC protection programme in the DRC said he will determine if further action would be taken against the ICC officers who have been dismissed.

"Disciplinary measures, including dismissal, have already been taken in respect of certain staff involved. The Registrar is in the process of analysing the content of the full report in order to assess whether further disciplinary action is required," the ICC Public Affairs Unit indicated.

According to the communication, the court will pursue a legal procedure against one of the alleged perpetrators and if found guilty, he will bear criminal responsibility of sexual assault.

"The review panel confirmed the results of the ICC's initial internal inquiry, and concluded that one person alone, the alleged perpetrator, would bear criminal responsibility for the alleged crimes if proven," the statement indicated.

The inquiry was commissioned in June this year after four individuals under the ICC protection programme in DRC complained that court staff had sexually harassed them.

In the report, the inquiry concluded that the staff members dismissed had failed to do their work of managing and supervising affairs of people under ICC's protection programme.

The four people under the ICC's protection programme complained that they were sexually abused by a former court employee working in the DRC.

The internal inquiry was set up to analyse the allegations by the four people under the ICC's protection and determine if the former ICC staffer was culpable.

Former International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda prosecutor **Brenda Hollis** chaired the four-member panel of independent specialists which handed over the report to ICC judges, the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute President Tiina Intelmann and other parties involved in the cases in the DRC.

DRC referred its situation to the ICC in 2004 after which ICC narrowed down to charge Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, Germain Katanga, Bosco Ntaganda, Callixte Mbarushimana, Sylvestre Mudacumura and Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui for killings of about 800 civilians.

Special Tribunal for Lebanon

Friday, 20 December 2013

Press Release

Decision on trial in absentia in the Merhi case

Leidschendam, 20 December 2013 – The Trial Chamber decided today to try Hassan Habib Merhi in his absence.

In issuing this decision on trial in absentia, the judges relied on reports from the Lebanese authorities detailing their efforts to apprehend the Accused and to inform him of the charges against him. They also relied on efforts by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon to publicise the indictment against Mr. Merhi and on its widespread coverage in the Lebanese media.

An indictment against Mr. Merhi was confirmed in July 2013 and served on the Lebanese authorities to search for, arrest and transfer the accused to the custody of the STL. This is an ongoing obligation.

“The Trial Chamber has concluded that Mr. Merhi has absconded or otherwise cannot be found and all reasonable steps have been taken to secure his appearance before the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and to inform him of the charges by the Pre Trial Judge,” the decision stated.

The STL is the only international tribunal that allows for trials in absentia, which is permissible under Lebanese law. Trials in absentia are a measure of last resort possible under strict conditions:

- If the accused has waived the right to be present;
- If the accused has fled or cannot be found;
- If the State concerned has not handed the accused over to the tribunal.

The Prosecution has now applied to join Mr. Merhi's case with the four Accused in the Ayyash et al. case. If permitted, Mr. Merhi would then be jointly charged and tried in the Ayyash proceedings.
