

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

**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

**Enclosed are clippings of the latest local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:**

Wednesday, June 01, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.  
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact  
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## *at Special Court*

# Witness tells how mother was killed

By Betty Milton

The witness TF2-188 yesterday wept in Court as she narrated her ordeals with the Kamajors in Talia. The suckling mother said that she was in Blama when some Kamajors two of whom she recognized as Mohamed and Moriba attacked them. She stated that their house was demolished simply because they were accused of pounding pepper at night, which is a taboo to the Kamajors. She said an

argument later arose among them, so they took her and her mother with them to Talia. The witness maintained that they carried bundles of personal belongings to Talia, which were searched for arms by Alieu Kondewa but found nothing. The witness said, "Kondewa then ordered his boys to capture my mother. I went to my mother and she also told me that Kondewa had given orders that she should be killed." When asked whether her mother

was killed the witness said, "yes I saw Mohamed and other Kamajors take my mother, tied her hands behind her back and started to hit her on her side with a stick." At this point, the witness started

sobbing as she was unable to control her emotions. In continuing her evidence in Mende through an interpreter, the witness narrated "I was forced by the Kamajors to

*Contd. Page 2*

## *at Special Court*

*From Front Page*

leave the area but I refused and told them that you are killing my mother and I would not leave the area." Continuing her testimony, the witness said, "my mother's throat was spilt downwards with machete and stick as I was standing there crying." During cross

—examination by Yada Williams lawyer for Third Defendant - Alieu Kondewa, the witness said the last time she saw Kondewa was in Kambia and if he is in Court she would recognise him. She was then given the opportunity to identify Kondewa. As she identified him the witness burst into tears again.

United Nations



Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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## **UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 30 May 2005**

*[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]*

### **Taylor Assures Abuja**

*(The News and The Independent)*

- According to the Nigeria-based *New Age* newspaper, former Liberian President Charles Taylor has visited with the Nigerian authorities in Abuja to explain recent widespread media reports that he has been violating the terms of his asylum agreement.

### **"Taylor's Return Will Threaten Liberia's Security" Says ECOWAS and UN**

*(Liberian Express and New Democrat)*

- The United Nations has agreed with ECOWAS that former President Charles Taylor's return under any guise would threaten Liberia's stability, according to a final communiqué issued at the end of a meeting among representatives of the National Transitional Government, UN and ECOWAS.

June 1, 2005, Wednesday, BC cycle

Wanted for war crimes, Liberia's ex-president hunkers down in Nigerian exile

By DANIEL BALINT-KURTI, Associated Press Writer

CALABAR, Nigeria

Nigeria is coming under increasing pressure to expel ousted Liberian President Charles Taylor so that he can face trial in a U.N.-backed war crimes tribunal, a move now supported by the United States.

Taylor, a former warlord, has been accused of backing rebels notorious for hacking off hands and arms in the 1991-2002 Sierra Leone civil war, allegations that Taylor denies. The U.N.-backed tribunal wants him out of Nigeria, where he's in exile, to face charges.

A U.S. official on Tuesday said "the time has come for this to happen."

The U.N.-backed tribunal also accuses Taylor of violating his asylum agreement by meddling in the affairs of Liberia and its neighbors. Prosecutors accuse him of ties to al-Qaida.

Washington helped arrange Taylor's flight to Nigeria as rebels besieged his capital, Monrovia, in August 2003. Then, the world applauded Nigeria for granting Taylor asylum, saying that was the only way to bring peace to Liberia.

Now the United States favors Taylor's extradition.

"We believe that justice will not be complete until Charles Taylor appears before the court to answer the charges against him and believe the time has come for this to happen," said Rudolph Stewart, a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria.

He said that President Olusegun Obasanjo had not done enough by offering to hand Taylor over to Liberia, rather than the court in Sierra Leone. Taylor has been accused of backing the rebels in Sierra Leone's civil war.

The anti-Taylor chorus has heightened its pitch in recent months as the U.N.-backed court, based in the Sierra Leone capital of Freetown, said it has new evidence showing Taylor was behind a January attempt to assassinate Guinea President Lansana Conte - himself accused of backing the rebels that fought against Taylor.

After assassinating Conte, Taylor hoped to relocate to Guinea, where he is already forming a new rebel group, the court says.

Sierra Leone's government would be attacked next, and the war crimes court "disrupted," according to an internal document, which says all this is scheduled to take place by the time of Liberia's Oct. 11 presidential elections.

Sierra Leone for the first time last week called for Taylor to be handed to the war crimes tribunal. Until then, it had kept quiet so as not to be seen as trying to influence the court.

Taylor triggered Liberia's descent into violence when he launched an insurgency from neighboring Ivory Coast in 1989 - hastening a cycle of violence across West Africa.

The peace deal under which Taylor left Liberia brought an end to 14 years of conflict, in which an estimated 250,000 died. The country's fragile peace is now monitored by 15,000 U.N. troops.

Taylor vowed upon his departure to return to Liberia but Taylor's spokesman, Vaani Paasawe says a return to power is the last thing on the former ruler's mind and denied all the allegations.

"He has told me categorically, he does not want to be president," Paasawe said. "He would like to return to Liberia, certainly - as a former president."

Paasawe also said Taylor would break a long media blackout and hold a press conference Aug. 11 - two months to the day before elections in his homeland.

Nigerian presidential spokesman, Femi Fani-Kayode, said media interviews are not allowed under an unwritten asylum agreement with Taylor, and that Taylor has not informed Nigerian authorities of the planned statement.

"He is being monitored very closely and we certainly won't tolerate a situation where he operates outside the conditions. If necessary, extra steps will be taken," said Fani-Kayode.

Taylor himself was unavailable to speak to The Associated Press during a recent attempt to visit him in the verdant southeastern Nigeria town of Calabar. The government has provided him with a cream-colored villa overlooking a winding river and forest as far as the eye can see.

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## **UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 31 May 2005**

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05/31/2005 13:02:36

### **Wanted for war crimes, Liberia's ex-president hunkers down in Nigerian Exile**

CALABAR, Nigeria (AP) \_ Wanted on war-crimes charges, Liberia's former President Charles Taylor is keeping out of sight as he nears a second year of exile in a jungle-encircled African city.

#### **Taylor Will Not Get Fair Trial in Sierra Leone Says Crony**

- Appearing on an ELBS Radio talk show yesterday, a crony of former president Charles Taylor, Sam P. Jackson said he believed Mr. Taylor cannot get a free and fair trial in the Special Court for Sierra Leone due to prejudice.

## Addis Tribune, Ethiopia

### UN Pressed over Taylor

The special court in Sierra Leone has called on the United Nations Security Council to help bring former Liberian President Charles Taylor to justice.

Mr Taylor has been indicted on 17 charges of crimes against humanity for his role in Sierra Leone's conflict.

He has been living in exile in Nigeria since 2003.

The Security Council said in a statement that all those accused of serious crimes by Sierra Leone's special court should face trial there.

Prosecutors and human rights groups are pushing hard for Liberia's former leader to be handed over to the UN-backed court.

Mr Taylor was granted asylum in Nigeria in return for giving up power as part of a deal to end Liberia's civil war.

However, the court's prosecutors say this was never intended to be permanent and the Security Council should pass a resolution calling for Mr Taylor to be sent to Sierra Leone.

The chief of investigation for the court said Mr Taylor remained a threat to peace and security in West Africa and there was credible evidence that earlier this year, he was involved in an assassination attempt on the president of Guinea.

The court's chief prosecutor, David Crane, added that Charles Taylor had harboured members of al-Qaeda and more recently, helped al-Qaeda send money to a presidential candidate in Liberia's upcoming elections.

The president of the special court, Emmanuel Ayoola, told the Security Council the importance of trying Mr Taylor could not be over-emphasised because of the strong impact it would have on public perception of the court and its contribution towards combating impunity.



For up to the minute sports.



## UN: Taylor's Return to Liberia Bad for Peace

**This Day** (Lagos)

NEWS

May 30, 2005

Posted to the web May 31, 2005

By Paul Ibe  
Abuja

The United Nations (UN) has warned that former Liberian President, Charles Taylor currently on exile in Nigeria should not be allowed to return to his country as his return home would threaten the security and stability of Liberia and the West African sub-region.

Taylor is currently in exile in Calabar, Cross River State, as part of a deal between the United States, UN, African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) among others to pave way for a return to peace and security in the beleaguered nation. There has been mounting pressure, especially from the US Congress that the former Liberian leader be allowed to stand trial for war crimes in Sierra Leone.

The UN warning is, however, against the backdrop of insistence by the Nigerian-born President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Justice Emmanuel Ayoola, that Taylor's trial will enhance the battle against impunity.

Rising from its troika second meeting at the ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja last Thurs-day, the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL)-UN-ECOWAS Coordination Mechanism on Liberia warned that

"Taylor's return under any guise would threaten Liberia's stability" and put in jeopardy the election slated for October.

The meeting noted that the equally tenuous situation in the Manor River States of Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal and Burkina Faso and the crisis in Togo may spark a chain of reactions that will compromise the security of the sub-region if Taylor makes his way back to Liberia.

Acknowledging the role that Nigeria played in the departure of Taylor, the meeting underscored the fact that the exit of the former Liberian leader was "a crucial step in the efforts to tackle the culture of impunity within the region."

While noting the contribution of groups, in particular the collaboration of the NTGL, ECOWAS, United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the broader UN system, donors and humanitarian agencies, as well as the vigilance of that country's civil society to the consolidation of peace in Liberia, the meeting solicited for assistance towards the successful conduct of the October 2005 poll.

It noted that the October 2005 polls constitute "a critical milestone in the transition process," and warned that



any attempt to "derail them would deal a mortal blow to the incremental process to nudge Liberia out of crisis."

To this end, the meeting noted with satisfaction efforts by the National Elections Commission (NEC) to meet targets for the conduct of transparent, free, and fair polls, in particular its registration of 1.2 million potential voters of a possible estimate of 1.5 million.

It applauded the stance of NEC, ECOWAS, US Government and the UN against any changes in the election time table as was attempted by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly.

It pledged to mobilize additional resources, including supplementary financial injections, provision of transport, election experts and monitors to complement the efforts of the electoral body.

While welcoming efforts underway to register civil society organizations as observers during the polls, the meeting urged the AU, ECOWAS, UN, EU and other stakeholders to field monitors and observers for the October polls.

It acknowledged the overriding need to maintain vigilance to avert a possible disruption of the electoral process, and called upon UNMIL to take decisive steps to ensure adequate security for the electoral process.

It noted that progress has been achieved in key areas such as the effective deployment of the 15,000-strong UNMIL troops (for which the UN spends \$800m annually) and about 2,000 civilian police; the formal completion of disarmament and demobilization phase of rebel group that had demobilized 103,000 ex-combatants; the steady progress in creating conducive environment for return of refugees and internally displaced persons; as well as extending access and security throughout the territory to humanitarian and donor agencies.

The troika urged the international community to provide support in the form of vehicles, rehabilitation of police stations, communications and other equipment for the Liberian police service to enhance public safety and combat community crime.

Also, it said that security reform should take into account the rehabilitation of the judicial, penal and immigration systems.

It expressed concern over the lack of probity and accountability and rising cases of graft within the transitional government in particular and the wider society in general. Whilst attributing the widespread incidence of corruption and lack of accountability to the "desire by unscrupulous individuals to exploit systemic weaknesses brought about by war and collapsed institutions," the meeting pointed out that "culpable behaviour and a lack of political will in the high echelons of power have exacerbated the problem of graft."

It welcomed the deployment of ECOWAS investigators and economic crimes experts to Liberia to examine the allegations and the Economic Commission-sponsored audit.

It hailed the decision by the Group of Development Partners comprising of UN, European Union (EU), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), US Government and ECOWAS to establish "an economic governance action plan, for possible submission to the UN Security Council after further consultation on the draft Action Plan."

Even as it observed that the UN Security Council Targeted Sanctions regime is "a potent tool in the fight against impunity and the restoration of peace in Liberia," the meeting called for the adoption of "clear, well-defined transparent criteria to guide the inclusion or exclusion of individuals within the regime "

However, it advised that in taking such decisions, efforts should be made to consult with key stakeholders in the peace process, including ECOWAS and diplomatic missions in Liberia.

The Officer-in-Charge of UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa told journalists at an interactive session weekend that the issues of funds needs to be urgently addressed because of its implications to the entire process.

He said that if the process of holding elections in October is not kept on track, the tendency is to fall into the caprice of those who do not want the polls leading to chaos and anarchy; a relapse that may inevitably affect the sub-region and cause a possible truncation of the process of finding lasting peace after 14 years of fratricidal war.

Though acknowledging that most of the funds being made available by donors is being channelled through UN agencies and NGO's, Moussa, however, said that the "little resources that are coming should be well utilized for the well being of the people of Liberia.

On the perceived discriminatory policy of international community, especially the US and its allies in responding to crisis in Africa, as was the case in Sudan, Liberia and Sierra Leone among others, the envoy said that the "same enthusiasm as in Asia and elsewhere like during the Tsunami disaster" should be brought to matters affecting African nations.

He noted that African countries have contributed significantly in immeasurable ways, especially in the areas of contribution of troops and receiving of refugees, but added that the governments can still do more.

Moussa, who is also the Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator of the UN System for Liberia dispelled fears that the UN is leaning more towards the US position, saying if it were, the global body would have asked Nigeria to hand over Taylor.

Noting that the UN is "independent," the envoy said that it needs credible proof to ascertain that Taylor travelled out of Nigeria and that he still interferes in the affairs of that country.

But the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Ayoola had Friday said that Taylor should be tried for crimes against humanity in order to enhance the war against impunity.

Ayoola told the UN Security Council that the trial of Taylor and former Sierra Leonean junta leader, Johnny Koroma, would contribute strongly to a positive perception of the court by Sierra Leoneans and Africans.

Taylor, who has been in exile the country since August 2003 and Koroma were indicted by the court on 17 counts in March 2003. He said that the delay in the transfer and trial of Taylor would negatively affect the court's completion strategy, funding and security arrangement.

President Olusegun Obasanjo has lately been under pressure, especially by the US Congress to hand over Taylor for trial. Also, the Open Society Justice Initiative, a non governmental organization had initiated a court case to compel the Federal Government to hand over Taylor to answer for war crimes, including against Nigerians living then in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Obasanjo has, however, refused to budge insisting that Taylor's exile in the country was a product of consensus with the international community including the US and that the former Liberian leader would only be handed over to a democratically elected government of Liberia.

## Features: Human Rights

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## The righteous sword of the law, part II

by Chris Tenove, 31 May 2005



[click to listen to the programme](#)



**The diamond fields stretch for hundreds of metres in every direction, an eerie landscape of craters and mud heaps. Nearby, one of the miners stands waist-deep in chalky water, carefully sifting muck through a metal sieve. He stares intently at the swirling mud. One tiny diamond, and he could be changed from a poor man into a rich one.**

The dream of diamonds has brought thousands of men here, to Kono District in eastern Sierra Leone. And, according to David Crane, Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, it also brought war.

It is estimated that around 70,000 people were killed in Sierra Leone in the 1990s. Thousands more were maimed, and a third of all Sierra Leoneans were forced to flee their homes. Throughout the civil war, Crane says, armed factions fought to hold on to the diamond fields, and diamonds were used to purchase weapons and supplies.

He tells me of one particular village, Tombodu, that was targeted for its diamond pits. While under the control of a man named Colonel Savage, Crane says, civilians were "chained to the pits and fed only enough food to keep the sifters and the pick axes moving. As they died of malnutrition and heat and exhaustion and thirst, they were pulled out and thrown into a particularly incredible place called Savage Waters or Savage Pit."

On Crane's recommendation, I set out to find Savage Pit, in the village of Tombodu. Along the way I stopped to ask people why the war atrocities happened, and whether the Special Court can bring a sense of justice to the conflict's victims.



**David Crane, Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone**

### Beneath the Water

Tombodu was one of the last rebel strongholds, and it is a husk of its former self. Most buildings bear scars of the occupation; in some cases, all that remains is a single, shattered concrete wall.

**'Someone I didn't expect to see for the rest of my life.'**

Alsine N'Jai runs the state lottery office in Koidu, a major town near Tombodu. Across the dusty road several young men sit on their motorcycles. They chat, laugh, and wait to

be hired as taxis. N'Jai tells me that some of these men are known ex-combatants. In fact, it is not uncommon for war victims to walk along the street and see their former tormentors.

"I have witnessed a situation when a woman screamed when she saw somebody who raped her," he says. "She was there unconscious for 10 minutes. When people asked what happened, she said, 'I saw someone I didn't expect to see for the rest of my life.' She explained what he did to her. But at the end, no one could arrest him."

There were around 30,000 combatants in the civil war. At the moment, the Special Court is trying nine of them. And N'Jai, like many Sierra Leoneans, is angry that so many walk free. "We are not saying each and every [rebel] fighter needs to be taken to court and punished," he says. "But there are those who carried out acts of atrocities on a very large scale. And I tell you, they move around bragging about what they did."

On the edge of the village there is a small pond. It is surrounded by tufts of reeds, and the sky is reflected in its dark, glassy surface. This is Savage Pit. Beneath the waters, there are said to be hundreds of corpses. If you look closely, you can see a few human bones poking out of the mud.

Here, I meet a Tombodu man I will call Sahr Karoma, to protect his identity. He has already testified at the Special Court as one of Crane's witnesses. He describes how civilians were lashed together and forced to mine diamonds, which were given to rebel commanders. But the story he really wants to tell is about his brother. On the orders of a junior commander, Karoma's brother was shot dead and left out on the rocks for three days. His body was then thrown into the water.

Neither the man who ordered the killing, nor the man who did it, are on trial at the Special Court. "This is a big surprise," Karoma says. "There is no reason these people should not be arrested. They weren't working with commands of the boss, they were just doing their own wish...If you bring them now in front of me, I will be able to identify them."



**A shattered concrete wall, all that remains of a home in Tombodu that was destroyed during the civil war**

### Greatest Responsibility

David Crane knows that many Sierra Leoneans want to see more people on trial. But that was never an option, he says. The Special Court for Sierra Leone was designed to be smaller, faster, and cheaper than the tribunals for Rwanda and Yugoslavia. Both cost more than 90 million euros a year, and both will last over than a decade. The Special Court, by contrast, will cost about 90 million euros in total. (The Court is a partnership of the Sierra Leonean government and the United Nations. It is largely funded by voluntary donations of UN member states.)

Due to these financial constraints, Crane says, he had to focus on a few people who bear the greatest responsibility for war atrocities. "That was my mandate, to prosecute those who bear the greatest responsibility, and that is 20 or less," he says.

*"If you change greatest to most responsible, it goes up to about 300, and the life of the court goes to 15 or 20 years. If you want to prosecute everyone who bears responsibility, that is 30,000 people, and it can't be done."*



A former resident of Tombodu looks out over Savage Pit

Elise Keppler, a legal counsel for Human Rights Watch, argues that "the mandate has been interpreted in a way that is excessively narrow, and should include those...mid-level commanders who really distinguished themselves for the brutal nature of crimes committed."

Tim Kelsall, a lecturer in African politics at Newcastle University, says the idea that just a few people bear the greatest responsibility for the conflict "rests on shaky philosophical foundations." And the Special Court's message is further undermined because the four most notorious men -- the one's who might deserve the title of "most responsible" for war atrocities -- have avoided the Special Court's justice. Rebel leader Foday Sankoh died before trials began, the vicious Sam "the mosquito" Bockarie was killed in Liberia, renegade military leader Johnny Paul Karoma is missing and possibly dead, and Charles Taylor - the former warlord of Liberia -- is in asylum in Nigeria.



Miners at work in the diamond fields near Koidu, in eastern Sierra Leone

### Making a Bright Example

The debate about who should be prosecuted is not just a question of cost or numbers of indictees. It is also about different conceptions of the war. Court investigators focus on the highest tiers of command and pay particular attention to regional and international links to the conflict. For instance, David Crane has repeatedly and very publicly accused Charles Taylor of using Sierra Leonean diamonds to buy weapons from the terrorist group al-Qaeda.

There is a huge gap between that kind of story of the civil war and the ones told by Sierra Leoneans like Sahr Karoma. As we stood next to Savage Pit, he told me that above all he would like to see the trial of his brother's

killer. For him to get a true sense of personal justice, he says, "that man needs to be punished."

Still, Karoma says that it was important for him to testify at the Special Court-not just for what these few leaders did in the past, but also for peace in the future. "They should punish those people who are highly responsible, and make a bright example of them," he says. "If they allow [leaders] like this to go free, tomorrow another person will get up and do the same thing."

*"I don't want this war to repeat again. Because if it happens again, there is no future, no hope for this country. Right now we are fighting for peace. Thank God there is peace."*

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#### Related Articles:

- **The righteous sword of the law, part I (24-05-2005)**

#### External Links:

- **Special Court for Sierra Leone**
- **International Crisis Group (Sierra Leone)**
- **Human Rights Watch (Sierra Leone)**
- **International Centre for Transitional Justice (Sierra Leone)**

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