

**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:

Tuesday, 10 June 2008

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

Local News

Special Court Prosecution Response to Allegation of Witness Payments / <i>Awoko</i>	Pages 3-4
The Liberian War: From Containment to Escalation / <i>Standard Times</i>	Page 5

International News

(Untitled) / <i>BBC World Service Trust</i>	Pages 6-7
Liberian Truth Commission Investigating Atrocities Comes to Minnesota... / <i>AP</i>	Pages 8-9
UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 10-12
Rwandan Suspects to be Extradited / <i>BBC</i>	Page 13
Ugandan Rebels 'Prepare for War' / <i>BBC</i>	Pages 14-15

Awoko

Tuesday, 10 June 2008

Special Court Prosecution response to allegation of witness payments

By Betty Milton

The Defence motion is without merit and should be dismissed

In their response to the defence motion filed against them on the 20th May, the Special Court Prosecution team has respond that the motion is without merit and therefore urged the Trial Chamber to dismiss the said motion.

In their written motion, the prosecution team submitted that rule 39 (ii) authorizes the prosecution to provide for the safety, support and assistance of potential witnesses and sources both before and after the indictment and that Article 15 of the Statute of the Special Court also provided mandates that the prosecution act independently in carrying out its functions.

They further submitted that since June 2004, they [prosecution] have been providing the defence with information showing the disbursement and other documents and that during cross-examinations, the defence often refers to these documents and that these issues raised by the defence is not so since they have been using these document for over three years now.

The prosecution also submitted in their response that this matter was not raised at the earliest opportunity, and that the defence chose not to raise it during the prosecution case nor during the Issa Sesay case and that the

defence has not offered any reason for its delay.

It was also submitted that according to rule 5 it requires that “where an objection of non-compliance with the Rules or Regulations is raised by a party, at the earliest opportunity, the Trial Chamber or the designated Judge may grant relief if the non-compliance has caused material prejudice to the objecting party.”

The prosecution also cited certain parts of the Statute and the Articles of the Special Court which gives them [prosecution] the responsibility to preserve, store and secure information and physical evidence obtained in the

course of their investigations.

Special Court Prosecution response to allegation of witness payments

From Page 2

The prosecution also submitted that Rule 39 (ii) “grants to the prosecution a wide and unfettered discretion.

The prosecution is permitted to take all measures deemed necessary for the purpose of the investigation.

It is for the prosecution, and prosecution alone, to determine what support and assistance to witness” it gives.

They continued “moreover, it is not confined to witnesses; the Rule also applies the same discretionary power on the prosecution with respect to sources.”

They added that suggestions

made by the defence in their motion concerning investigation which they said is operative only during the investigation stage, “erroneously restricts the meaning of investigation as defined in the Special Court Statute.”

They revealed that some potential witnesses were forced to be relocated on an emergency basis because of threats to their safety and of their families.

Some of these witnesses were relocated and were forced to give up their employment and that others were inconvenienced to the

extent of being asked to come to Freetown 3 or 4 times to testify and they were forced to stay much longer because of the slow process of the trial.

Because of these, the prosecution added they have acted within the authority granted to them, in the Special Court Rules and these information disclosed to the defence to permit them to raise those issues deemed relevant, adding that “the inflammatory language adopted in the Motion does not mask the absence of substance.”

PAGE 14 STANDARD TIMES Tuesday June 10, 2008

VIEWPOINT

THE LIBERIAN WAR: From containment to escalation

Barely one week after the Banjul Summit of the Standing Mediation Committee established ECOMOG in August 1990, a military contingent drawn from contributing member states-Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Gambia and Sierra Leone-was assembled at Queen Elizabeth Quay in Freetown, Sierra Leone, for onward deployment in Monrovia. Under the command of Ghana's General Arnold Quainoo, ECOMOG troops landed in Monrovia on August 24, 1990, to commence what they dubbed "Operation Liberty. Significantly, but unfortunately, "Operation Liberty commenced without the consent of all the warring parties in the Liberian conflict, nor a prior cease-fire agreement.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the troops had hardly disembarked from their naval and merchant vessels when they came under a barrage of artillery fire from the leading rebel faction, the NPFL, which had militantly opposed the deployment of a peacekeeping force. An eye-witness account of the beginning of "Operation Liberty": On landing, nothing had changed at the diplomatic level to raise bright hopes for ECOMOG in the task ahead. And so, the force had to inch ahead against all the persistent odds.

The fierce fighting we sensed on the high sea between the NPFL rebels of Charles Taylor and the forces of Prince Johnson did not subside. Even as sea men struggled to anchor the ships and off-load their contents, heavy gunfire cracked, interspersed with booms from mortar, lasting for an hour.

From the very beginning, therefore, the ECOMOG mission was a complex peace-building operation that differed fundamentally from traditional peacekeeping. The implication of this was that "at the onset, the political character of Quainoo's force would be that of an expeditionary force which the mainstream rebel movement, the NPFL of Charles Taylor, perceived as a status quo movement whose real design was to prevent it from achieving absolute power.

ECOMOG's response to its baptism of fire from the guns of the NPFL was initially defensive. In doing so, the strategy was to consolidate their hold by establishing a wide defense perimeter beyond its initial headquarters located within the Free-port area of Monrovia.

This move involved "pushing" rebel forces away from the immediate vicinity of Monrovia where they had been dug-in, in preparation for their final drive to capture the Executive mansion. In practical terms, this meant an uneasy combination of defensive and offensive strategies which produced two unpleasant consequences: a)

the escalation of conflict between the "peacekeepers" and the rebel groups, particularly the NPFL; and b) the rapid evaporation of whatever measure of confidence was reposed in the neutrality of ECOMOG forces by the rebel factions as well as the outside world.

With the capture of President Doe by Johnson's rebel faction in the premises of ECOMOG and his consequent torture to death, ECOMOG's original mandate and strategy were completely transformed. General Quainoo of the Ghanaian Army was promptly replaced as Force Commander by a Nigerian officer, General Dogonyaro, who thenceforth reported directly to the Nigerian president, General Ibrahim Babangida, who tersely instructed General Dogonyaro to "stabilize the chaotic situation, end the bloodletting and create an enabling atmosphere for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. According to Margaret Vogt, the new Field Commander was "also ordered to try and prevent arms and ammunition continuing to come into the rebel forces, who were still not subscribing to a cease-fire.

With additional reinforcements of troops and material from Nigeria and Ghana, General Dogonyaro reorganized the ECOMOG force structure. He then launched a "limited offensive" operation against the NPFL in a bid to impose some form of order in Monrovia and en-

The fierce fighting we sensed on the high sea between the NPFL rebels of Charles Taylor and the forces of Prince Johnson did not subside. Even as sea men struggled to anchor the ships and off-load their contents, heavy gunfire cracked, interspersed with booms from mortar, lasting for an hour

courage the warring factions to yield to ECOWAS' demands for political negotiations.

Margaret Vogt described the incident in the in the following passage:

The adoption of a strategy of 'limited offensive' by ECOMOG should...be viewed within the perspective of the complete paralysis of social order in Liberia. Electricity, water supply and other social services had been cut off so Monrovia was a depressing disease-infested graveyard...with no food and with people unable to move from one end of town to another. The liberation of the central power plant and the main water works from the rebel forces and their reactivation...was one of the major objectives sought through the adoption of a minimum enforcement action. The NPFL, which was the most hostile of the rebel



groups to the multilateral force, was driven out of the firing range of the Monrovia region.

Furthermore:

The limited offensive action succeeded in placing a check on the excesses of the various contentious factions. Prince Johnson's faction was successfully restricted to a sector of the city while the Armed Forces of Liberia, having disintegrated since the death of Samuel Doe, had no claim to any territorial area.

The enforcement action persuaded the various factions to accept a cease-fire agreement under the supervision of ECOWAS and to commence extensive dis-

cussion with each other; thus facilitating the convening of the All-Liberia Conference...which resulted in the formation of the interim government headed by Dr. Amos Sawyer.

The restoration of civil facilities, law and order at Monrovia had made it possible for the interim government to establish itself in Monrovia....

The pacification of Monrovia had led to the restoration of hospital facilities, schools, hotels and a return of normal economic activity enough for many of the foreign Embassies to resume normal diplomatic activities. The most important achievement of the enforcement action was the facilitation of the evacuation of thousands of refugees consisting of national of various West African countries, and Liberian nationals also... several humanitarian organizations which were previously hand-

capped in providing relief assistance to the refugees had their efforts facilitated by the security provided by the multilateral force. Despite its immediate successes, the "limited offensive" operation was called off, partly in response to growing public concern in the contributing states over the rapid increase in casualties, and also to allow for political negotiations between the warring factions and ECOWAS diplomats. General Dogonyaro was recalled back to Nigeria and replaced by a more placable Field Commander. During this period, several peace initiatives were made which resulted in several cease-fire agreements. But

ECOMOG defensive lines in the city shanties, abducting frightened civilians. The strategic Port area and ECOMOG headquarters were all threatened.

...ECOMOG was forced into a defensive-offensive posture in an operation which months later pushed NPFL forces far from the capital. When it was over, the NPFL had lost several strategic areas and economic zones, including Roberts (field) International Airport, Firestone Plantations and the country's second largest seaport and city, Buchanan, to ECOMOG and the civil authority of President Sawyer.

One other major consequence of this operation was the dramatic reinforcement of ECOMOG forces to an all-time high of 14,600 troops. ECOMOG maintained this troop level until the onset of the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement in late 1993.

That this latest enforcement action by ECOMOG stabilized the military situation in Liberia and contributed in large measure to Charles Taylor's unilateral declaration of cease-fire, as well as his subsequent appeal to the United Nations' envoy to initiate the political negotiations that culminated in the Geneva II-Cotonou Accord, supported current scholarly thinking about the need for multinational forces interposed between parties in conflict to move "beyond the sheriff's posse" and become "powerful peace-keepers" instead.

According to Sir Brian Urquhart, such a transition "from a series of somewhat lonely (and sometimes embattled) presences in conflict areas into a more general and consistent method of policing and facilitating international decisions... could become an important and effective symbol of a new determination to relieve the peoples of the world of unnecessary conflict, excessive armaments and the constant threat of war.

BBC World Service Trust

Monday, 9 June 2008

Charles Taylor's lawyers at the war crimes trial of the former Liberian president are continuing the questioning of Prosecution 29th witness, Albert Saidu.

The latest examination focused on a letter the witness said Sam Bockarie gave him to deliver to Taylor through NPFL General Jungle in Liberia.

BBCWST/SFCG Producer Alphonsus Zeon reports.

ZEON: Defence lawyer Morris Anyah dwelled on the contradictions between Saidu's courtroom evidence and his recorded testimony to Prosecution investigators in Sierra Leone. In the recorded testimony, Saidu is quoted as saying upon delivering the letter he was given weapons to take back to Sierra Leone. But in court, Saidu said he only delivered the letter to Jungle and took no arms thereafter.

ANYAH: This is what you told the Prosecution on 28 March 2007. It reads: "The witness returned immediately to Buedu and Jungle sent a jeep full of ammunition with the witness." Do you see that, Mr Witness?

SAIDU: Yes.

ANYAH: That is saying that after you gave him the letter he sent ammunitions in a jeep with you back to Buedu, yes?

SAIDU: No, I returned alone. I did not come with a jeep. I did not come with a jeep with ammunition. The only time that I went in Liberia that I came with ammunition in a vehicle was when I went to 50.

ANYAH: what is written on this page by the Office of the Prosecutor being attributable to you is in error, yes?

SAIDU: Well it's a double information...

ANYAH: I am not asking you whether it's double information, or whether the same page contains information about two different meetings or trips to Liberia. I am asking you whether what is written on the page is in error, yes or no?

SAIDU: I believe so. It should be an error.

ZEON: On the source of support for RUF war, Anyah suggested that the RUF was purchasing arms from another Liberian faction, ULIMO-K.

ANYAH: In 1996, in December, you, Mr Witness, you were asked to accompany CO Kennedy in taking diamonds to ULIMO-K in exchange for ammunitions, correct?

SAIDU: Never did anybody order me to go with CO Kennedy anywhere to buy ammunition.

ANYAH: Did you ever hear of the RUF purchasing arms and ammunition from ULIMO-K?

SAIDU: I did not ever hear that and I don't know.

ANYAH: Well, let me read you what TF1-516 told this Court... "He came back to Buedu. He was given some amount of money to be taken to Sam Bockarie in Buedu. At that time ECOMOG was carrying out disarmament in Liberia and the ULIMO-K who were assigned along the Sierra Leone-Liberian border used to cross into Buedu with ammunitions and Sam Bockarie used to buy those ammunitions from them." And then the next question: "Q. Were you in Buedu when Martin the Cat came back from la Cote d'Ivoire with money to buy ammunitions from ULIMO-K? A. I think that was early 1997." Mr Witness, another witness is saying that Moinama was sent with money to come to Buedu to buy ammunitions from ULIMO-K because ULIMO-K used to cross the border into Buedu with ammunitions. Were you aware of that when you were with the RUF, Mr Witness?

SAIDU: Personally I was not aware.

ZEON: Saidu said besides arms supplied by Taylor, the RUF got arms from the battlefield. He said in one of such clashes, the RUF captured a 40-barrel missile from Guinean troops.

ANYAH: But you do know about captured weapons such as the 40 barrel gun you spoke of the other day, right?

SAIDU: Yes.

ANYAH: That was a weapon you said was captured from the Guineans, yes?

SAIDU: Yes.

ANYAH: So it would be fair to say that ECOMOG was a source of weapons that the RUF used to the extent that they captured them from ECOMOG, yes?

SAIDU: I don't know.

ZEON: Taylor, dressed in a blue coat suit, a white shirt with a blue neck tie sat in court, drinking water from white plastic cups and taking notes.

Associated Press

Tuesday, 10 June 2008

Liberian truth commission investigating atrocities comes to Minnesota to hear from exiles

The Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minnesota: Thousands of miles from Liberia, exiles who fled the ravaged West African country years ago will get the chance to tell their stories this week to the country's truth commission.

Minnesota is home to the largest Liberian community in the United States, numbering more than 20,000. Other exiles are expected to come from Atlanta, Philadelphia, New York and Providence, Rhode Island.

Public hearings by the commission designed to document wartime atrocities begin on Tuesday in the music hall at Hamline University and continue through Saturday.

"Liberians in the diaspora have always had a burning desire for change back home," said Jerome Verdier, who heads the nine-member Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia. "It's a significant voice we think should not be overlooked."

The violence in Liberia, which was founded in 1847 to resettle freed slaves, started in 1979 when government security forces killed dozens during riots over the price of food. A bloody coup toppling the presidency of William Tolbert followed a year later. In 1989, rebels led by warlord Charles Taylor invaded from the Ivory Coast, setting off another civil war that ended 14 years later when Taylor was forced into exile in Nigeria.

He is now being tried by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, in The Hague, Netherlands, on war crimes charges in connection with a rebel movement in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Verdier said 97 percent of Liberia's population was displaced at one point or another during the years of violence. Most who could get out left. Many refugees from the country ended up in Minnesota and other pockets on the East Coast.

The commission has already taken statements from more than 1,000 Liberians in the United States, United Kingdom and a refugee camp in Ghana since starting its work in 2006, said Jennifer Prestholdt of Advocates for Human Rights, a Minneapolis-based organization coordinating contact with Liberians outside of Liberia.

About 30 Liberian refugees who live in the U.S. are expected to testify this week.

The commission aims for a full accounting of wartime atrocities. It doesn't have the power to charge perpetrators with crimes, but can recommend prosecutions, reparations and policy changes to the Liberian government. Verdier said the ultimate goal is to prepare the ground for a lasting peace.

In Minnesota, Verdier said he expects to hear about the early years of conflict, when many of the U.S. refugees left the country. Exiles also are expected to raise concerns about immigration and legal issues. Hearings in Liberia have centered on the violence from 1990 to 2003, which is fresher in people's minds there.

The Rev. James N. Wilson II, an Episcopal priest who left Liberia in 1997 and now lives in Minnesota, said he is looking to the commission to bring peace and reconciliation to his homeland. Wilson said he plans to attend several of the sessions this week.

"The hearing means a lot to me personally," he said. "It means a lot for us as a nation because it provides an excellent opportunity for us to be part of the history."

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 9 June 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

New 'One UN' Office Opens in Northern Liberia

(The Informer, The News, Liberian Express, Heritage)

- Speaking in the provincial Voinjama in Lofa County, when he commissioned the first joint-UN office in Liberia, Deputy UN Envoy, Mr. Jordan Ryan, entreating staff of the United Nations in Liberia to advance the concept of the One UN "at work together", encouraging even greater joint planning and programming.
- The joint-UN office will bring together six UN agencies and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) under one roof.
- The agencies are the – FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, and WHO – together with UNMIL. Under the 'One UN' umbrella, the UN entities will now share facilities and expertise, undertake joint assessments and collaborate in planning, programming, implementing and monitoring projects in Lofa County.

TRC begins public hearings in America today

(The Informer, The Inquirer, The Analyst)

- Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the body charged by the Liberian government with determining the facts of the human rights violations that occurred during the civil war, will meet in St. Paul, Minnesota, marking the first time any nation has ever conducted such public hearings in the United States. The hearings are scheduled to begin on today, Monday, with public sessions set for 10 June through the 14th and will focus on the experience of Liberians in the Diaspora. "To fulfil our charter and our mission, we need to hear the stories of our citizens who fled their homes and ultimately their country. Their experience is a part of what happened to our country at war with itself; understanding and sharing those experiences is an important part of our healing," said TRC Chairman Jerome Verdier.

Trial of ex-public officials resumes today

(The Parrot, National Chronicle)

- The corruption case against several former public officials was due to begin today at the Criminal Court C in Monrovia. The ex-government officials, according to an indictment, used fictitious companies allegedly owned and operated by them to defraud the state of millions of United States dollars. The selection of jurors in the case ended last Thursday, almost two years after they were arrested and released on bail.
- Their trial comes after the court declared invalid, a criminal appearance bond filed by former transitional leader Gyude Bryant and others. Bryant is himself indicted for economic sabotage along with the former Speaker Edwin Snowe and others.

New US Ambassador Expected July

(The News, Liberian Express, The Analyst)

- The new US Ambassador to Liberia is expected in the country early July to commence duty as the most senior U.S. diplomat. According to reports, Linda Thomas-Greenfield has been confirmed by the US Senate as America's Ambassador to Liberia.
- Ms. Thomas-Greenfield replaces Ambassador Donald Booth who will be taking off assignment in Zambia as the US Ambassador there.
- Ambassador Booth has been in the country since July 2005. His tenure here was his second posting. He previously served as a Commercial Officer at the US Embassy in Liberia.

School authorities under probe for impregnating 24 students at Guthrie

(The News, Liberian Express)

- The Ministry of Education has constituted a team to investigate circumstances surrounding the pregnancy of about 24 students at the Guthrie School System in western Bomi County.
- Education Minister Dr. Joseph Korto said when facts are established that the impregnated students were under the age, the matter would be forwarded to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution because of the statutory nature. He told a news conference Saturday in Monrovia that reports of sexual activities among students and teachers were worrisome.
- He called on local authorities and stakeholders in Bomi County to cooperate with the team of investigators, adding "this is totally unethical and runs contrary to the education profession."
- Dr. Korto recounted that the Ministry of Education, a week ago, completed an investigation of a sexual offense involving Mr. Daniel Gbofia, Principal of the C.H. Henry Public School in White Plain, Montserrado County.
- He said Mr. Gbofia was found guilty of impregnating female students and has since been penalized in keeping with section 4.16 of the Administrative Penalties of the Education Laws which states that "any teacher, professor or school administrator investigated and convicted of impregnating students or teachers shall be dismissed or suspended from teaching for five years for first offense, and for second offense, dismissed with his teaching license revoked indefinitely."
- Additionally, he said similar cases involving Mr. Jefferson Coleman, Principal of Weajor Public School and Morris Varney, a teacher at the Yancy Public School, both in Bomi County, are presently undergoing investigation. Dr. Korto said these investigations are in line with the Ministry of Education's commitment to fight unwholesome practices in schools to create an enabling learning environment for the students.
- He condemned sexual activities among students and teachers, but blamed parents for doing nothing to discourage sexual relationship between their daughters and schools authorities.
- He said unless parents prioritize the education of their girl children, sexual abuse would continue.

President Sirleaf returns home amidst search for new finance minister

(Daily Observer, New Democrat, National Chronicle, The Parrot)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is due to return home today after concluding a two-week visit in the United States at the Global Fund for Women 20th Anniversary, where she renewed her commitment to advance issues which continue to affect the progress of women. Most dailies said one of the major challenges facing the President upon her return is the appointment of a new finance minister to replace outgoing Minister Dr. Antoinette Sayeh.
- Sayeh, a former senior executive of the World Bank, recently announced that she was stepping aside to take up an even more senior assignment with the IMF. Similarly, the media speculated that Planning and Economic Affairs Minister Toga McIntosh is also due to tender his resignation for a senior position at the World Bank. Despite the overwhelming public support for the appointments of the two Liberian ministers, Daily Observer said the next finance minister should equally be up to the task, particularly in making the ministry corruption-free, people and business-oriented.

Radio Summary

Star Radio (News culled today from website at 8:35 am)

24 Inmates Break Jail In Gbarnga

- Reports say 24 inmates have staged a jail break at the Gbarnga Central prison in Bong County.
- In an interview, the Superintendent of the prison, Mulbah Sumo claimed the prisoners broke jail Saturday in the presence of personnel of the Liberia National Police and UNMIL.
- Mr. Sumo said eight of the escapees were detained on allegation of rape, one on murder, another for armed robbery and the rest were detained for minor offences.
- He said prior to their escape they had complained of prolonged detention.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Former Finance Officials Go to Court Today

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Gender Ministry Donates Assorted Materials To Women in Grand Bassa

- The Gender and Development Ministry has donated several assorted items to the women of Grand Bassa County.
- The items including typewriters, sewing machines, generator and rolls of cloths.
- The Executive Director of the local women's group, Mrs Martha Karngar said the donation was intended to enhance the literacy and skills training programme of the group.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Criminal Court "A" Cites Doctor To Testify In Chinese Murder Trial

- Criminal Court "A" has cited a medical Doctor to testify to a report that the alleged killer of the Chinese Bamboo expert, Jiang Chingyu, is not fit to stand trial.
- The trial of the case has not begun because the defendant, Mohammed Konneh is said to be showing signs of insanity.
- Last year, Konneh allegedly stabbed to death the expert at the Monrovia Vocational Training Centre (MVTC) in Paynesville outside Monrovia.

BBC

Friday, 6 June 2008

Rwandan suspects to be extradited

Magistrates in London have upheld a request to extradite four men to Rwanda to face mass murder charges.

They are wanted in connection with the genocide in 1994 in which 800,000 people were killed in 100 days.

They are Dr Vincent Bajinya, of London, Charles Munyaneza, from Bedford, Celestin Ugirashebuja from Essex, and Emmanuel Nteziryayo, of Manchester.



All the men deny charges of conspiring to kill Tutsis

All four deny involvement and the decision will now be referred to the Home Secretary Jacqui Smith.

The four men, who were local government officials at the time of the genocide, face charges including genocide and crimes against humanity.

Violence erupted in the African country in 1994 after the Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana's plane was shot down and ethnic Tutsi rebels were blamed.

As soon as the president's death was announced, killing squads began attacking Tutsis and moderate Hutus across the country.

Thirty people have been convicted of involvement in the killings at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), based in neighbouring Tanzania.

Until last year a number of European nations were reluctant to extradite Rwandan genocide suspects because they would have faced the death penalty if they had been convicted.

But the Rwandan government has now scrapped the death penalty, opening up the way for extraditions.

On Thursday, France extradited another Rwandan genocide suspect, Dominique Ntawukuriryayo, to the ICTR.

Human rights campaign group Amnesty International said it would be "outrageous" if the men were extradited.

"The criminal justice system in Rwanda falls very short of internationally recognised standards and so there's a real danger that these men may not receive a fair trial," it said.

It said the men could be charged and given a fair trial in the UK, or sent to a third country where they would be guaranteed a fair trial.

BBC

Friday, 6 June 2008

Ugandan rebels 'prepare for war'

Uganda's rebel leader Joseph Kony is reportedly preparing a new offensive after refusing to sign a peace deal.

Diplomats say his Lord's Resistance Army is forcibly recruiting fresh fighters and acquiring new arms in neighbouring countries.

His fighters are reported to have attacked South Sudanese forces, killing 13 troops and seven civilians.

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni and the region's armies have this week all suggested taking military action.

The LRA is believed to be digging up arms caches and resuming their usual practice of abducting civilians, who are then press-ganged into acting as fighters, porters or concubines.

This is said to be taking place in a large area encompassing parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Sudan.

Around 1,000 new recruits have been added to around 600 existing combatants.

There are also reports that Chadian rebels have been seen offering them fresh supplies of weaponry.

Elusive

Former Ugandan peace envoy Betty Bigombe says it is a tragedy that Mr Kony refused to sign the peace deal agreed by his representatives after two years of talks in April.

"I still hope he will re-consider and sign," she told the BBC.

But President Museveni has regional support for military action.

Earlier this week, senior army officers from Uganda, South Sudan and DR Congo agreed on a plan to launch a joint military operation to crush the LRA.

However, BBC Africa analyst Martin Plaut says this strategy has been tried many times before, and even with Western backing, no-one has ever been able to capture or kill the elusive rebel leader.

Earlier, the Catholic Archbishop of Gulu in northern Uganda called



Joseph Kony is still hiding in eastern DR Congo

“ We're throwing all this away ”

Archbishop John Odama



for a peace deal between the government and the LRA.

Archbishop John Odama warned that the failure to achieve peace would destabilise the region and reverse the progress made during the peace talks.

"If we go now for war, it means we're throwing all this away," he said.

"This war was national and it has gone now to what we call regional, and therefore it is spreading. If it can be stopped before it goes to that extent, the better for Africa," he said.

Throughout the peace talks, in the South Sudan capital Juba, Mr Kony remained in DR Congo, while he and his top commanders were the subjects of arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

He is accused of numerous war crimes, including mutilating and abducting civilians and forcing thousands of children into combat.