

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



An aerial view of part of the Queen Elizabeth II quay, Cline Town

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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Thursday, 9 October 2008

Report from The Hague

Interview with Courtney Griffiths, QC by Joseph Cheeseman, Part two

The prosecution side of the case involving Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor in The Hague is gradually reaching its end. The prosecution believes it has produced what it called compelling evidence against Mr. Taylor. Well, the defence team has the obligation to prove that Mr. Taylor is innocent. Joseph Cheeseman of the BBC World Service Trust caught up with Mr. Courtney Griffiths, the Lead Lawyer for Mr. Taylor and first asked him, from the perspective of the defence how is the trial going? Mr. Griffiths also spoke about Chuckie and his father's detention and trial.

GRIFFITHS: Happily we're close to the end of the prosecution case, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

CHEESEMAN: When are you hopeful of coming out with your side of the case?

GRIFFITHS: Well it looks now as if the defence case won't commence until some time next year. Because after the close of the prosecution case we will need some time to put our witnesses in place, organize our witness order, organize the logistics of transporting witnesses from West Africa to Den Hague. All of that is going to take a little time. So we will need a couple of months at least after the end of the prosecution case to organize the defence case.

CHEESEMAN: Mr. Taylor continues to come to court restrained by a leather belt attached to handcuffs and what have you. Why do you think Mr. Taylor continues to yield to such measures?

GRIFFITHS: Because he's anxious not to derail the trial. He's anxious that the trial proceeds smoothly because he's confident that he's able to prove his innocence. And therefore he doesn't want to do anything which might jeopardize the smooth running of these proceedings.

CHEESEMAN: Charles Taylor Senior and Charles Taylor Junior are on trial for two landmark cases. Mr. Taylor as the first African head of state to be put on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity, his son Chuckie Taylor as the first American to be put on trial for (committing) of torture in Africa. What do you think? Is it a coincidence, a misfortune, or is it fate that has driven the two Taylors to this level?

GRIFFITHS: Well one has to bear in mind that the same country which has been the major force behind the setting up of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the demonization of former President Taylor is the same country in which former President Taylor's son is being tried.

CHEESEMAN: Which country is that?

GRIFFITHS: The United States of America. And consequently it probably doesn't take a conspiracy theorist to work out that there may well be good reason why Chuckie Taylor's trial just happens to take place at the same time as Charles Taylor's trial. Because by so doing you create this international image of this family of ogres, father and son, both involved in criminal activities so both of them must be guilty- you know, there must be something genetic about the Taylor family which drives them to crime, hence father and son being tried at the same time.

CHEESEMAN: Back home in Liberia Mr. Taylor was known to be a deacon in the Baptist Church. The other day he said he is a member of the Jewish faith, and he stayed away from court. People say he's trying to buy time. What do you think?

GRIFFITHS: Well I can't understand how him declaring himself to be a follower of the Jewish faith suggests that he's buying time. As far as I'm concerned his religious beliefs are a private matter for him and his lawyer. I am not his father confessor, and consequently what religion he chooses to pursue is entirely a matter for him and it's a subject upon which I don't think I'm qualified to offer any opinion.

CHEESEMAN: Finally, is there anything you wish to say, share with the people of Liberia that I didn't ask you?

GRIFFITHS: I would like to invite the Liberian people to follow this trial closely. It is of major interest to you, because Charles Taylor is your former President and what is being done to him is an attempt to criminalize not only him but the whole revolution which he set in train in Liberia to overthrow that despot, President Doe. So consequently it behoves the Liberian people to ensure that they truly act as his jury, and by following the trial they can come to their own verdict whether he be guilty or not.

BBC world Service Trust

Thursday, 9 October 2008

Conspiracy in Trials

The head of Taylor's defence team says it probably doesn't take a conspiracy theory to put Chuckie Taylor and his father, Charles Taylor on trial at the same time.

According to Mr. Griffiths, the same country referring to the United States of America that was the major force behind the setting up of the Special Court and the demonization of Mr. Taylor is same place where his son Chuckie is being tried.

He told the BBC World Service Trust trying Chuckie and his father at the same creates an international image for the family that both father and son were involved in criminal activities.

Meanwhile, the Lead Lawyer of Former President Charles Taylor has assured that his client would not do anything to jeopardize his trial.

Courtney Griffiths, QC in an interview with the BBC World Service Trust said Mr. Taylor was anxious not to derail the trial because he's confident that he's able to prove his innocence.

Mr. Griffiths called on the Liberian people to closely follow the trial of their Former President.

He said what is being done to Mr. Taylor is an attempt to criminalize not only him, but the whole revolution set in place by the Former Liberian Leader to overthrow what he referred to as the despotic regime of Former President Samuel Doe.

Mr. Griffiths said it is the duty of the Liberian people to act Mr. Taylor's jury to come up with their own verdict when the trial ends, whether the accused Former Liberian President is guilty or not.