

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



Rain clouds over Sussex beach

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:

Thursday, 10 September 2009

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

Local News

Taylor Was Behind AFRC's 'Operation No Living Thing' / <i>The Exclusive</i>	Page 3
"I Was Not Aware of RUF's Operation No Living Thing" / <i>The Spark</i>	Pages 4-5
"I Feel Accomplished"... / <i>Awoko</i>	Page 6
Joseph Kamara Named Acting Prosecutor / <i>Global Times</i>	Page 7
Rapp Pays Tribute to War Victims / <i>Global Times</i>	Page 8
Report on ICC Communications Sheds Important Light / <i>The New Vision</i>	Pages 9-10

International News

Taylor Refutes Testimony of Key Prosecution Witness / <i>CharlesTaylorTrial.org</i>	Pages 11-12
Interview With Rapp on His Appointment / <i>BBC World Service Trust</i>	Pages 13-14
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 15-18
Prosecutor Eyeing War Crimes in Afghanistan / <i>Associated Press</i>	Page 19
A Nuremberg for Guantánamo / <i>The New York Times</i>	Pages 20-21
ICC to Investigate Impunity Allegations / <i>Colombia Reports</i>	Page 22

The Exclusive

Thursday, 10 September 2009

Taylor Was Behind AFRC's 'Operation No Living Thing'

Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor and his Defence Team re-visited the horrific accounts of RUF Operation No Living Thing in which hundreds of Sierra Leoneans were murdered, amputated, or raped in 1998. Mr. Taylor said if the assassination attempt on his life at the Executive Mansion in 1996 had succeeded, Liberia would have been plunged into a cata-

strophic situation. The Former Liberian Leader told the court Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press reached its peak during his presidency. The Prosecution alleged in its indictment that Mr. Charles Taylor ordered and commanded the murder, amputation and rape of Sierra Leonean civilians. The Prosecution claimed the RUF Rebels supported by Mr. Taylor carried out the horrific atrocities in an op-

eration code named Operation No Living Thing.

The United States in a statement released on May 12, 1998, condemned the atrocities and said it suspected a West African Governments of supporting the rebels.

Mr. Taylor denied any connection with the RUF Operation No Living Thing.

The Defence Team on Tuesday re-visited an assassination attempt on Mr. Taylor at the Executive

Mansion in Monrovia in 1996, when he was member of the Transitional Government.

Mr. Taylor said he suspected that the Liberia Peace Council, the LPC Rebel Group headed by Dr. George Boley carried out the attack on him.

Mr. Taylor told the court if the assassination attempt had succeeded it would have had disas-

trous consequences on Liberia.

The defunct government of Charles Taylor and Press freedom in Liberia also took center point in Mr. Taylor's testimonies on Tuesday.

The Former Liberian President said Freedom of Speech and Press Freedom earned its true meaning during his presidency.

Mr. Taylor denied a

United Nations 1999 report that ill-discipline was endemic or widespread in the Liberian Security Forces under his control.

Mr. Taylor further dismissed that the use of marijuana or alcoholic beverages was associated with the Liberian security forces in his government.

Also read this story on www.exclusivepress.net

"I Was Not Aware of RUF's Operation No Living Thing!"

- Taylor Says

Charles Taylor did not order forces in Sierra Leone during or know about an infamous operation launched by rebel its civil war aiming to ensure that anything that had life must be

killed, he told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today.

"I was not aware of 'Operation No Living Thing,'" Mr. Taylor said at his trial in The Hague.

During the presentation of the prosecution's case, witnesses testified that Mr. Taylor worked in concert with



Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebels to plan "Operation No

Living Thing" against the Sierra Leonean population. After the operation, which saw the com-

Continued page 7

I Was Not Aware of RUF's Operation No Living Thing

From front page

mission of grave atrocities by the RUF and AFRC rebel forces, the United States released a statement on May 12, 1998 expressing concerns about the atrocities that were committed by the rebels. The statement also said sources indicated that the rebels were supported by an unnamed West African government. In his testimony today, Mr. Taylor denied any involvement in such operation.

"I did not instruct anybody to launch such an operation. I had no control over anybody in Sierra Leone. There is no way that I would be in control or even acquiesce in any type of situation of this sort when throughout the revolution in Liberia we never had these kinds of atrocities, so this is impossible," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor told the judges that he had "no advantage whatsoever" to gain from getting involved in such an operation in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor also admitted in court today that he knew there were Liberians who were fighting in Sierra Leone but these Liberians were mercenaries paid for their services by the fighting forces in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor referenced several discussions that he had with former Sierra Leonean president

Ahmed Tejan Kabbah about the presence of Liberians in Sierra Leone.

"Kabbah will tell me that there were Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone and I will say to him that I don't know how those Liberians got to Sierra Leone but we were trying to get them back to their country," he said.

He explained further that those Liberians who were fighting in Sierra Leone were not part of his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) but were remnants of other Liberian factions who had found their way to Sierra Leone.

"I thought they were just ULIMO-K [United Liberian Movement for Democracy in Liberia] and Armed Forces of Liberia personnel who had ran away following my election and they were just there as mercenaries," the accused former Liberian president said.

Mr. Taylor is accused of sending Liberians to Sierra Leone to fight alongside the RUF rebels against the government and people of Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied the allegations.

Mr. Taylor said he made frantic efforts to get the Liberians to leave Sierra Leone by offering them guarantees of non-prosecution for acting as mercenaries in a foreign country. He said that after some efforts, "some of

them returned, some were unidentifiable but those with the Special Task Force [a group of Liberian fighters who reports indicate escaped to Sierra Leone during the Liberian conflict and eventually fought alongside the Sierra Leone army] did not return. They remained in Sierra Leone and some even applied to join the Sierra Leone army."

Mr. Taylor also today refuted prosecution claims that whenever West African peacekeepers, based in Liberia, took off with their Alpha Jet aircraft to bomb RUF territories in Sierra Leone, he would send a radio message to the rebels to escape or put up a defense. Asked by his defense counsel whether he ever had any prior knowledge before the Alpha Jets took off from Liberia to launch operations in Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor said "I couldn't. The only time we would know of Alpha Jets was when they were in the air because they were very noisy."

Several prosecutors, including former RUF radio operators, have testified that whenever the Alpha Jet was getting ready to leave Liberia to attack RUF positions in Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor's radio operators would alert the RUF of such an attack. Mr. Taylor has denied being involved in any such communications with the RUF.

Awoko

Thursday, 10 September 2009

"I feel accomplished"

- Special Court Prosecutor

By Betty Milton

Joseph Kamara the newly appointed Acting Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone has said that he feels accomplished about the appointment and hopes to meet the challenges of the Special Court.

Questioned on what he hopes to achieve during the period that he will be serving as Prosecutor, Mr Kamara said that he relies on the promotion of the rule of law as Special Court stands for the promotion of the rule of law.

"As a Sierra Leonean I am proud to be part of the team that has achieved the rule of law" he maintained.

Kamara succeeds Stephen Rapp who resigned from the position early this month to head the office of the United States Ambassador - at - Large for War crimes.

Sierra Leonean born Joseph Kamara who is the first national to hold the position was initially appointed by the UN Secretary General and he will serve in that office until another prosecutor is appointed.

He joined the Office of the Prosecutor in January 2004, and a year later he was called upon to lead the CDF Prosecution Team as Senior Trial Attorney.

Joseph Kamara was appointed Deputy Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in August 2008 and he promised that he will ensure that justice is brought to the

victims of the rebel war and to Sierra Leoneans generally. Prior to joining the Special Court, Mr. Kamara worked for eight years as prosecutor in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, where he rose to the rank of Senior State Counsel.

Joseph Kamara was also elected President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association in July 2009.



Joseph Kamara

Global Times

Thursday, 10 September 2009

Special Court: Joseph **F. Kamara Named** **Acting Prosecutor**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has named Sierra Leonean lawyer Joseph Fitzgerald Kamara as Acting Prosecutor of the Special Court. The appointment is effective as of 8 September.

Joseph Kamara is the first Sierra Leonean to hold this post. He succeeds Prosecutor Stephen Rapp, who resigned this month to become the United States Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes. He will serve as Acting Prosecutor until a new prosecutor is appointed.

Joseph Kamara joined the Office of the Prosecutor in January 2004, and a year later he was called upon to lead the CDF Prosecution Team as Senior Trial Attorney. He was named Deputy Prosecutor in August 2008.

Prior to joining the Special Court, Mr. Kamara worked for eight years as prosecutor in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, where he rose to the rank of Senior State Counsel. In 1996, and again from 2000-2004, he worked in private practice, including several law firms in Washington, D.C.

In July 2009, Joseph Kamara was elected as President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association.

Global Times

Thursday, 10 September 2009

Rapp Pays Tribute To War Victims

By Sylvester Samba

The outgoing Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Stephen Rapp has paid a special tribute to all the victims that testified in the trial against those that are responsible for wounding their bodies and killing their loved ones, noting that the prosecution worked very

hard to fight for justice in their name even though he added, it was they

who 'truly made justice possible.' Mr. Rapp said the victims

were not afraid to tell the world what happened even after facing the worse

crimes. He said the Special Court will hold those responsible for it while in-

forming that he had been working for a decade now to
Cont page 9

cal sources referred to as

Rapp Pays Tribute To War Victims

bring justice to the victims of the most serious crimes committed by human kind-first at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and then at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The outgoing Chief Prosecutor explained further that he now leaves the representation of the prosecution of Charles Taylor in the capable hands of his colleagues and also expressed his gratitude to the people of Sierra Leone. He maintained that "since my very first day here, I have always been struck by the courage, tolerance, and the goodwill of Sierra Leoneans who suffered

so terribly during the civil war, and who are working each day to re-build their communities and their country".

He stressed that the prosecution is pleased that the trial process has reached the stage where Charles Taylor has the opportunity to respond to the charges against him and further stated that the accused is presenting a story that is very different from the evidence offered by the prosecution. He disclosed that they called over 90 witnesses who appeared in persons before the court and testified about the grave crimes committed against tens of thousands of inno-

cent victims in Sierra Leone.

Rapp concluded that "I must note that I am not able to comment on the specifics of his testimony, as the evaluation of his testimony is a matter for the Judges" and pointed out that they have been waiting patiently while the accused gives his own contrary version of events, and denies all the charges against him.

"We are looking forward to questioning him during cross-examination in the coming weeks. When our turn comes to ask the questions, we will confront Charles Taylor with the full weight of our case," the prosecutor noted.

The New Vision

Thursday, 10 September 2009

Opinion: Report On ICC Communications Sheds Important Light - NGOs

By Monique Legerman

The Hague — A RECENT IWPR report outlining shortfalls in the International Criminal Court's, ICC, communications policy shed light on the important issue of how the court gets its message out to communities affected by grave war crimes, representatives of organisations working in the field said.

IWPR interviewed Congolese journalists, lawyers and civil society activists who said people on the ground have little idea about what is going on in The Hague. Journalists and lawyers are frustrated that they do not have enough information about the court, and are struggling to disseminate news to the general population.

International non-governmental organisations, NGOs, told IWPR that the report was a useful and informative tool for them, because it came from a neutral observer, as opposed to ideas from NGOs that are involved with advocacy work at the court.

"NGOs have views on what the ICC should be doing, and different NGOs may have different goals. This is why a journalistic organisation is in a better position to provide neutral information" said Mariana Pena from The International Federation for Human Rights, FIDH.

"You went to the ICC and also to NGOs and interviewed different stakeholders. The article was written bearing in mind all the different comments made by the different actors with different positions. This material is a useful tool, coming from a neutral source, informing us about what the situation is," Pena said.

Chidi Anselm Odinkalu from the Open Society Institute said that in his view, those who are committed to the work of the ICC need to monitor it closely, criticise it constructively and hold it accountable to its mandate.

"I see the article as one such effort to ensure that the ICC lives up to its roles. I do not think it's an accident that since that article my colleagues and I over here have received some outreach inquiries and communications from the court and court staff appear to have got a bit more serious in outreach visits to different locations in Africa."

During one outreach effort in Abuja, Nigeria, in August, the ICC met legal representatives who may be interested in representing victims of an attack on an African Union base in Haskanita, Darfur, in September 2007. Nigerian peacekeepers were killed in the attack, and three Darfur rebels are wanted by the ICC as a result.

Odinkalu stressed that it is necessary to ensure the ICC communicates more clearly, routinely and effectively with both the media and actors on the ground.

“Those are probably the most effective mechanisms of outreach that the court has at its disposal given its resource constraints,” Odinkalu said.

The ICC has been working to ramp up its outreach activities, and has started a raft of new initiatives, such as a radio programme for victims in the Central African Republic, CAR, which borders the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC.

Justice Richard Goldstone, former chief prosecutor for the Rwanda and Yugoslav war crimes tribunals, said the media is the most effective way of explaining what is happening in the court, and to counter negative rumours or misconceptions.

He warned that if the court does not engage with journalists and inform them about its work, it will lose an essential ally.

Goldstone said that constructive criticism is important, and that if the media does not report what criminal courts do, then they can only have a limited impact on society.

“This applies in greater force with international courts because of the distance between the court itself, and victims and interested parties on the ground. In this context, the media is the other side of the coin of justice,” he said.

The ICC is based in The Hague in The Netherlands, thousands of kilometres away from the countries it deals with: Uganda, the CAR and the DRC.

It has been working since 2002 to bring the worst perpetrators of the world’s most unthinkable crimes to justice, and so far, has been most active in the DRC, with four individuals in custody. One trial is ongoing, and two more are due to kick off in the coming months. Investigators have started work in war-torn North Kivu province, an area beset by crimes of sexual violence, the recruitment of child soldiers and the illegal flow of weapons, but remain tight-lipped about progress.

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Wednesday, 9 September 2009

Liberia: Taylor Refutes Testimony of Key Prosecution Witness; Says He Did Not Plan To Destabilize West Africa

By Alpha Sesay

The Hague — Charles Taylor today made efforts to refute a prosecution witness' claim that Mr. Taylor was part of a common plan to destabilize West Africa.

Between February 8 to 11 2008, the Prosecution's eleventh witness, a Gambian named Suwandi Camara, testified that that Mr. Taylor, together with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh, and a Gambian rebel leader named Dr. Mani met in Burkina Faso and developed a common plan to destabilize West Africa. The witness also testified that Mr. Taylor recruited and armed children under the age of 15 years. (Mr. Camara was a linkage witness who said he was trained alongside Mr. Taylor in Libya and later became part of Mr. Taylor's Special Security Service (SSS)).

In his testimony today, Mr. Taylor denied ever knowing the Suwandi Camara and dismissed as lies the witness' claims that he (Mr. Taylor) had plans to destabilize West Africa.

"There was no such thing like this that occurred," Mr. Taylor said.

Asked by his defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, whether he did "coordinate such a movement with Dr. Mani and Foday Sankoh," Mr. Taylor said no. He elaborated that "there was not one Sierra Leonean, not one Sierra Leonean in Burkina Faso. The only people that were in Burkina Faso were the Gambians and Dr. Mani had come to Burkina Faso not along with the Liberian group."

Mr. Taylor also denied Witness Camara's testimony that when United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO-K) rebels attacked the Liberian town of Gbangha in 1994, Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) called on reinforcements from RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. "To reinforce Gbangha with the RUF means they (RUF) will have to fight through the entire ULIMO line right upto Gbangha," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also said that by the time ULIMO-K rebels attacked Gbangha, the NPFL no longer had a relationship with the RUF. "We have had our day with the RUF and it ended in 1992," he said.

In his testimony in February, Witness Camara claimed that he was a training instructor for the NPFL at the Gbartala training base in Liberia and that under his command, the NPFL recruited and trained young children who were under the age of 15 years. Mr. Taylor told the judges today that "that was a blatant lie and there will be witnesses to prove that it is a lie."

Explaining the role that children played in NPFL territory, Mr. Taylor said "people that were under the age of 18 were not trained as military personnel in the NPFL. They were family members associated with soldiers that helped to take care of them in their home, cooking for them, but they were not recruits of the NPFL. They did not have any command structure. If you have a bigger brother, you follow him, you were with him, but there was no fixed command structure of any group calling themselves SBU[Small Boys Unit]."

The prosecution has alleged that Mr. Taylor maintained a relationship with RUF rebels throughout the conflicts in both Sierra Leone and Liberia and that together with the RUF's leader, Foday Sankoh, he developed a common plan to wage war against the people and government of Sierra Leone. Prosecution witnesses have testified to the pattern of operations in Mr. Taylor's NPFL such as the use of child soldiers called SBUs, and have related the same patterns in the RUF where the child combatants were also called SBUs. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

Mr. Taylor also reinforced in court today the role he played in getting the RUF and the government of Sierra Leone to sign a peace agreement in 1999. In his testimony today, Mr. Taylor told the judges that after the signing of the peace agreement in Togo, he was able to convince RUF leader Foday Sankoh to travel and be based in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown. He said he proposed that his government will assign a special ambassador to assist in the implementation of the peace agreement between the RUF and the Sierra Leone government as well as the establishment of a hot-line to facilitate communication between himself and then Sierra Leonean president Ahbed Tejan Kabbah. He said that while the hot-line was not established, he was still able to "establish regular communication" with President Kabbah.

Mr. Taylor also revealed today that western countries were not very supportive of the peace agreement between the RUF and the Sierra Leone government. In his testimony today, he said that "members of the international community, especially the western countries, did not like certain aspects of the agreement and they hinted that they will not support it, for example, the provision granting amnesty to combatants and the positions that were given to the RUF in the government." Mr. Taylor said he informed the United Nations Secretary General that any such step by western countries not to support the peace agreement will undermine the peace efforts in the country.

BBC World Service Trust
 Wednesday, 9 September 2009

INTERVIEW WITH RAPP ON HIS APPOINTMENT IN OBAMA'S ADMIN

09/09/09

The SCSL Chief Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, has resigned from the SCSL. He succeeded Desmond De Silva and became the third Chief Prosecutor of the SCSL in 2006. His resignation from the SCSL was officially brought to the notice of the UN Secretary General September 7, after he had received nomination from President Obama to serve as United States Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues at the US State Department in Washington.

The BBCWST Adolphus Williams met with him in The Hague before his departure to the United States and he first asked him, what are some of the challenges he faced while working as a Chief prosecutor at the SCSL.

RAPP: Well the challenges involved, making that we've got the resources, that we've got the great lawyers and investigators that we need to put on strong cases, and in the case of Charles Taylor that involves the particular complication of holding someone responsible when they weren't at the scene of the crime, when they never entered Sierra Leone, and we have to show the connection between them and those that directly committed these offences. So that's been the greatest challenge, has been obtaining the testimony, bringing forth those witnesses, putting this all together. The court at the same time has had the challenge of making sure that it has the resources to pay for the security and for the witness protection and for the defence teams and the prosecution and for the judges and everything else, and that's ended up taking a fair amount of my time as I've been spreading the news about the good work that the court is doing, and also going directly to capitals and the kind of financial contributions the court needs to finish its job.

WILLIAMS: In early July you were nominated by President Obama to be United States Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, and you have given notice to the United Nations Secretary-General that you will resign as Special Court prosecutor. Firstly, why the nomination?

RAPP: I was asked by Secretary Clinton to take on this position. I was invited to the State Department and we discussed international justice and discussed the need for accountability for atrocities around the world, and was asked if I would be willing to take this on. I said I wanted to make sure that I was leaving at a good time for the court and whatever remained to be done was in capable hands, and in terms of the sequencing of time it looked like we would be able to get the RUF case concluded through appeal, which we were in terms of our arguments last week in Freetown, and the evidence we need to meet the defence case when we finally begin to cross-examine Charles Taylor and the other witnesses, and I've been able to do that, and we've been able to assure that there are very, very good people that will stay on. Brenda Hollis, who's led the Taylor trial since the beginning, Senior Attorney in international humanitarian law who won the first case in international humanitarian law at the Yugoslavia...and she would have remained the Principal Trial Attorney of course and doing that work in court even if I were still prosecutor. And that will continue, and her whole team will carry forward. And at the same time Deputy Prosecutor Joseph Kamara, I'm very proud of, has been working with the Office of the Prosecutor from the beginning, has now been designated by the Secretary-General to become Acting Prosecutor. I've recommended that he succeed me as prosecutor although that will be a decision in the hands of the

Secretary-General and there'll, I'm sure, be several candidates interviewed for it. But I'm pleased to see the sort of handover of the court to Sierra Leoneans, because it was part of the principle of the court that this was to be a partnership and that we were gonna be able to leave behind what President Koroma has referred to as a magnificent and imposing legacy for future generations.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Rapp, you talked about Brenda Hollis as a very good team leader and she's capable to lead the prosecution. But your nomination now means you are leaving behind an unfinished job, a vacuum and very big shoe for your team-mate, Brenda Hollis, aren't you?

RAPP: Well, these are the attorneys that were handling this case in court on a daily basis. As you recall, I was here to lead the testimony of Moses Blah and another witness, and to make the opening statement, but it had never been anticipated that I'd be the individual who'd be cross-examining any of the witnesses. Those who cross-examine need to be attorneys that are here every day, and my job has been based in Freetown, and I've spent most of my time in Freetown and on the road for the court and perhaps about ten percent of my time here in The Hague. The greatest challenge for our case is to make sure that the resources are there to finish. And I think that as the United States Ambassador for War Crimes, the country that's made the largest contribution to the court and is now committed to even talk to other countries about their contributions, I think that I'll be able to carry that forward as effectively in my new job at the same time that I'll be able to spread the word and really spread the lessons that we've learned in the Sierra Leone court to other places in the world, so I'm not leaving international justice, I'm not leaving the Taylor case, I'm not leaving the Special Court for Sierra Leone. I'm going on to a job in which I'll continue to serve it and the cause of international justice, and the same great people that would have been under my leadership will now have full responsibility and I'm confident that they can do that. I've been pleased by the farewells that I've received from my colleagues. Everyone's very pleased about my appointment. They very much know that they've got the ability and capacity to go forward in this case, and are looking forward to communicating with me in the future in my new position.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 9 September 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian Parliament approves bill for 2011 elections

Sep 09, 2009 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- MONROVIA, Sept. 9, 2009 (XINHUA) -- The lower house of the Liberian Parliament, the House of Representative, has passed a major electoral bill that gives the country's National Elections Commission the right to begin planning and executing activities for the up-coming elections slated for Oct. 2011, in line with the Constitution. Lawmakers passed the bill on Tuesday after its submission to the parliament in August 2008. The Liberian House of Senate had already approved the bill. The parliament had delayed the bill for months mainly arguing over what number a threshold should be set for the elections of representatives and senators to the parliament. The passage of the bill finally set the threshold of all the various constituencies across Liberia at 40,000. On Tuesday, most of the 64 lawmakers voted in favor of the bill, with only 12 of them against it. With the passage of the bill, an additional 21 lawmakers would join the Liberian House of Representative when elections are held in 2011.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone

UN Names Local Lawyer to Top Post in Court Trying War Crimes in His Homeland

Sep 09, 2009 (UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- For the first time a Sierra Leonean is serving as acting prosecutor of the United Nations-backed Special Court trying those accused of violating international humanitarian law and national law in the civil war that tore the West African country apart between 1996 and 2001. Appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, senior Sierra Leonean lawyer Joseph Fitzgerald Kamara took up his post today pending the naming of a new prosecutor to replace Stephen Rapp, who resigned earlier this month to become UN Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes.

Mr. Kamara, who worked for eight years as prosecutor in Sierra Leone's Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, rising to the rank of senior state counsel, joined the Special Court's Office of the Prosecutor in 2004 and was named Deputy Prosecutor a year ago. Earlier this year he was elected President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association. Set up jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the UN in 2002, the Court is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and national law committed in Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996.

'I Was Not Aware Of RUF's Operation No Living Thing,' Taylor Says

Sep 09, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Charles Taylor did not order or know about an infamous operation launched by rebel forces in Sierra Leone during its civil

war aiming to ensure that anything that had life must be killed, he told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today. "I was not aware of 'Operation No Living Thing'," Mr. Taylor said at his trial in The Hague. During the presentation of the prosecution's case, witnesses testified that Mr. Taylor worked in concert with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebels to plan "Operation No Living Thing" against the Sierra Leonean population. After the operation, which saw the commission of grave atrocities by the RUF and AFRC rebel forces, the United States released a statement on May 12, 1998 expressing concerns about the atrocities that were committed by the rebels. The statement also said sources indicated that the rebels were supported by an unnamed West African government. In his testimony today, Mr. Taylor denied any involvement in such operation. "I did not instruct anybody to launch such an operation. I had no control over anybody in Sierra Leone.

Cote d'Ivoire

Vanco Energy Company Rewards Rock Solid Images with a Rock Physics and Seismic Inversion Study in Cote d'Ivoire

Source: Business Wire Date: September 09, 2009

LONDON & HOUSTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Rock Solid Images, a member of the OHM Group announces today that the company has been awarded a seismic reservoir characterization project offshore Cote d'Ivoire covering 2,000km² by Vanco Energy Company. Vanco Energy Company's Vice President of Exploration, Ronald L. Wallace, Sr. said: "This study is an extension to the successful and recently completed prestack seismic inversion projects conducted by Rock Solid Images over our Orca and Baleine prospects and builds upon the ongoing prestack seismic inversion of the Bassam Canyon prospect. Our collaboration with Rock Solid Images has given us new insight into these highly prospective areas and this extension will enable us to further de-risk our prospect portfolio". Rock Solid Images Senior Vice-President, Gareth Taylor said: "We are delighted that Vanco and their partners have been sufficiently impressed by the quality of our recently concluded seismic conditioning and prestack inversion projects to have awarded us this significant project extension that will hopefully yield a more definitive image of the down-dip geometries and properties of their **Cote d'Ivoire** prospects.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf Promises Tougher Actions for Ineffective Officials

(New Democrat, The News)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has warned there will be more dismissals if government officials fail to remain efficient, productive, and resourceful.
- President Sirleaf said she would however not bow to public sentiments or pressure to dismiss any of her officials.
- Speaking to journalists, the President said dismissal of officials would be based on substantive and justifiable information.
- President Sirleaf recently dismissed LPRC Managing Director Harry Greaves, Deputy Minister of State for Legal and Economic Affairs Aloysius Jappah and suspended Education Minister Joseph Korto and two of his principal duties.

Population Threshold Bill Finally Passed into Law

(The Inquirer, The News, Heritage, Public Agenda)

- The House of Representatives has concurred with the Senate to pass into law the "controversial" population threshold bill.
- The House finalized the passage of the compromised version of the bill Tuesday after a defeat of the motion for reconsideration by Maryland County Representative David Saydee.

- Representative Saydee requested the House to pass the threshold at 48,000 provided no County shall lose its present seats. However, majority members of the House rejected the motion and set the threshold at 40,000 provided no County shall have less than two seats.
- Under the new threshold, Gbarpolu, River Gee and most likely Bomi would lose one of their current three seats in the House.

Senate Halts Confirmation of INHRCL Nominee

(The News, The Informer, Public Agenda, Heritage)

- The Senate has suspended for time indefinite the confirmation of a nominee of the Independent National Human Rights Commission of Liberia (INHRCL), Mr. Losene Bility.
- President Sirleaf requested the Senate to withhold the confirmation of Mr. Bility who is being investigated in connection with a case involving six Pakistanis held for alleged human trafficking.

Foreign Ministry Extols UN Mission's Role In The Country

(Heritage, Public Agenda, The Inquirer)

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Olubanke King-Akerele has emphasized the central role that mission continues to play in the country.
- Minister Akerele made the statement when the new UNMIL Deputy Special Representative for Recovery and Governance, Mr. Moustapha Soumaré paid her a courtesy call.
- Mr. Soumaré said Liberia was a country in which the UN was committed to making a difference and called on the International Community to support the country's vision..

UNMIL Deputy Envoy Wants ERU Transform Skills to Practical Action

(The Informer, Public Agenda, Liberian Express, National Chronicle, Daily Observer)

- The UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) for the Rule of Law, Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu, has reminded officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP) Emergency Response Unit (ERU) to transform their abilities into practical service to their communities.
- Speaking at a ceremony in Monrovia, DSRSG Mensa-Bonsu cautioned the LNP officers against the misuse of their strength and power, which could bring shame and dishonour to the force.
- The ceremony marked the completion of a three-month intensive training for 80 officers of the elite ERU at the LNP's Training Academy in the Paynesville suburb.

Special Court Names Sierra Leonean as Acting Prosecutor

(The News)

- The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, has named a senior Sierra Leonean lawyer Joseph Fitzgerald Kamara as the new prosecutor of the Special Court.
- A release from the Special Court for Sierra Leone said Mr. Kamara replaces Stephen Rapp, who resigned earlier this month to become US Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes.
- This is the first time a Sierra Leonean is serving as acting prosecutor of the United Nations-backed Special Court.
- He will serve as Acting Prosecutor until a new prosecutor is appointed.

Angry Mob Demands Justice Following the Killing Of A South African National

(The Inquirer)

- Days after the death of a South African national on Randall Street an angry mob yesterday staged a protest in demand of justice.
- Police are currently investigating two Chinese men linked to the gruesome death of Wesley Daames.
- The mob yesterday threw stones and other harmful objects at officers of the Liberia National Police after the suspects were taken to the Randall Street residence of the deceased.
- Though it is not known why the suspects were taken to the residence of the deceased but sources said it was intended to recreate the scene and help with the ongoing investigation.

Local Media – Star Radio *(culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

President Sirleaf Promises Tougher Actions for Ineffective Officials

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Population Threshold Bill Finally Passed into Law

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Two Chinese Under Probe for brutal murder of South African

- Reports say investigators of the Liberia National Police are continuing their probe into the brutal murder of a South African, Wesley Daames.
- Li Ma, 21 and Meng Weng, 24 are two Chinese arrested in connection with the murder.
- An UNMIL translator has been called in to assist because the two Chinese men claimed they can not speak English.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Senate Halts Confirmation of INHRCL Nominee

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Major Agriculture Project For Six Counties Underway

- Reports say a US\$100,000.00 agriculture project is expected to be launched today in Deso Town, District Number Three, Grand Bassa County.
- The project will be sponsored by the Liberians Decentralized for Local Development which operates under the United Nations.
- The agriculture project which is intended to promote the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) is a community-driven initiative through the Internal Affairs Ministry.

Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 09:45 am)*

LACC Determine to Fight Corruption

- The Executive Chairman of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), Cllr. Frances Johnson-Morris, says the Commission is determined to investigate and prosecute all acts of corruption in both the public and private sectors.
- Speaking when the Zambian Auditor General, Annah Orlia Chifungula visited the LACC, Cllr. Morris said audit reports from the General Auditing Commission (GAC) were assisting in ongoing investigations of corruption cases.
- The Zambian Auditor General said corruption continues to undermine development on the continent.

Associated Press

Thursday, 10 September 2009

Prosecutor eyeing war crimes in Afghanistan

By EDITH M. LEDERER

UNITED NATIONS — The prosecutor for the International Criminal Court said Wednesday he is collecting information on possible war crimes by NATO forces and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Luis Moreno Ocampo said he is also conducting preliminary inquiries on possible war crimes in Georgia, Colombia, Kenya, Ivory Coast, and by Israeli forces in Gaza.

Ocampo told a briefing on the emerging international criminal justice system that he plans to open four new investigations in the next three years, but he refused to disclose any details.

The International Criminal Court, which began operating in 2002, is the world's first permanent war crimes tribunal. Afghanistan is one of the 110 countries that have ratified the Rome treaty which created the tribunal and are therefore legally bound by its provisions.

Under the treaty, the court can step in only when countries are unwilling or unable to dispense justice themselves for genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

Ocampo said it has been "very difficult" to collect precise information about some of the alleged crimes, but his office has benefited from reports produced by non-governmental organizations who "arrived before us and provided information to us."

He said he has requested information from human rights groups and groups inside Afghanistan as well as the Afghan government — and would be "very open" to information from foreign governments.

Taliban fighters have been accused of many brutal killings. There have also been some accusations of U.S. forces in Afghanistan using excessive force and torturing prisoners.

He confirmed that allegations involved both the Taliban and NATO forces.

The Clinton administration signed the Rome Treaty establishing the court, but the Bush administration rescinded the U.S. signature, arguing that the court could be used for frivolous or politically motivated prosecution of American troops.

Asked whether any NATO soldier is now a potential target of the court if he or she commits a war crime in a country under the court's jurisdiction, he replied that NATO's legal adviser was at the court's headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands last week discussing this issue.

In the training NATO is doing, Ocampo said, it is explaining to colonels that in the future they could end up before the court if they commit atrocities.

"That is the most important (thing) because these massive atrocities are planned. So if those who are planning know they will be prosecuted, they will do something different," he said.

The New York Times
Wednesday, 9 September 2009

A Nuremberg for Guantánamo

By GUÉNAËL METTRAUX (Op-Ed Contributor)

At the end of World War II, the Allied powers found themselves in charge of thousands of captured enemies, many of whom had committed unspeakable crimes. Some among the victors thought that the prisoners should simply be shot. Others, including many in the American government, steadfastly insisted that these men should be subjected to criminal proceedings. Thus the Nuremberg trials were born, tribunals that meted out justice for some of the 20th century's worst atrocities while demonstrating the return of the rule of law on the European continent and the superiority of democratic values over Fascist lunacies.

The Guantánamo detainees pose a similar conundrum today. Trying these men stateside would necessarily require the compromise of long-cherished principles of American law. Yet continuing to hold them without the prospect of a fair trial or delivering them to undemocratic governments are alternatives not worthy of the Obama administration or of the United States.

America's own endeavors at Nuremberg offer a way out of this impasse: an international tribunal for detainees. Such a tribunal would allow the Obama administration to finally try these individuals and close down Guantánamo — and it would bring the nation back within the tradition of law and justice that it so forcefully defended six decades ago.

We need not look as far back as Nuremberg. Recent international tribunals for Sierra Leone, Cambodia and Yugoslavia have provided fair trials in challenging political environments to men and women accused of the gravest of crimes. In The Hague right now, an international criminal tribunal is looking into the terrorist attacks that shook Lebanon in 2004 and 2005. This tribunal — created by the United Nations Security Council at the initiative of the United States, among others — provides a ready model of a court capable of dealing with the detainees.

Those now held in Guantánamo would be placed under international control and their trials held on neutral ground. American and foreign judges and prosecutors with experience in international criminal cases would then be enlisted to provide the expertise required to hear these types of criminal cases. As with the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, it would be paid for by a combination of American contributions and voluntary donations from other nations.

The support of the international community — particularly from Middle Eastern countries and those European nations that played a part in the detention or transfer of these men — would be imperative to providing legitimacy to the process and the guarantees of independence and impartiality necessary to its success. Moreover, any convictions would need to bear the stigma of the entire world, not just that of a single nation.

An international criminal tribunal would not answer all the legal questions surrounding the war on terrorism. But by putting its faith in the law, the Obama administration would send a potent message to both its supporters and its enemies. By giving a fair trial to the Guantánamo detainees, the United States would reassert its core values and demonstrate the supremacy of those values over the evil that has been challenging them.

The chief prosecutor at Nuremberg, Robert H. Jackson, said: “We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants is the record on which history will judge us tomorrow. To pass these defendants a poisoned chalice is to put it to our lips as well.” Let us hope that the wisdom of his prophecy has not been lost to those who will decide the fate of the Guantánamo detainees.

Guénaél Mettraux, the author of “The Law of Command Responsibility,” represents defendants before international criminal tribunals.

More Articles in Opinion » A version of this article appeared in print on August 20, 2009, on page A27 of the New York edition.

Colombia Reports

Wednesday, 9 September 2009

ICC to investigate impunity allegations

JAVIER EMILIO VALENCIA



The International Criminal Court (ICC) will investigate allegations that Colombia's government used extradition as a tool to secure impunity for Congressmen with ties to paramilitary groups.

Ivan Cepeda, director of the National Movement of State Crimes, said he will denounce at the ICC the extradition of paramilitary warlords to the USA as an instrument of impunity as they are out reach of Colombian justice to redress the victims of their crimes against humanity once they arrive in the American jails.

Both Cepeda and National Police commander Oscar Naranjo will meet Wednesday with ICC investigators.

Naranjo announced he will defend Colombian law enforcement agencies and explain they work hard to guarantee the respect for human rights and the protection for all Colombain citizens.