

**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:

Wednesday, 13 June 2012

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

Local News

David Crane Reviews Himself.../ <i>The Democrat</i>	Pages 3-4
...1138 War Victims to Get Social Security Allowances / <i>Awoko</i>	Page 5

International News

The Taylor Verdict - a Fair Result but a Highly Flawed Process / <i>The New Dawn</i>	Page 6
PUL Hosts War Crimes Court's Chief Prosecutor / <i>Daily Observer</i>	Page 7
Taylor's Appeal Judgment Due Next Year / <i>Heritage</i>	Page 8
Appeal Chamber Could Overturn Verdict / <i>The New Dawn</i>	Pages 9-10
Taylor Could Get Less Sentence If... / <i>The Inquirer</i>	Pages 11-12
Whither African Leadership? / <i>Daily Trust</i>	Pages 13-14
The 'International Justice' Delusion / <i>New York Post</i>	Pages 15-16
Statement by Commonwealth Secretary-General / <i>Commonwealth Secretariat</i>	Page 17

David Crane reviews himself, and it was GREAT!

Seeking Justice for Liberia: Reflections of a Prosecutor

JURIST Contributing Editor David Crane of Syracuse University College of Law says that the conviction and sentencing of former Liberian president Charles Taylor by the Special Court for Sierra Leone should not keep justice from being sought against him for crimes committed against his own people...

I watched the helicopter hover over the landing zone next to Lumley Beach near Freetown, Sierra Leone. It was my birthday and it was pouring rain. The craft settled on the pad, its blades slowing. Members of my investigative office watched intently as the back ramp of the helicopter opened. Standing next to me was my chief of investigations, Alan White. He turned to me and grimly smiled, "Happy birthday." He and his team moved forward to retrieve from the helicopter the body of Samuel "Mosquito" Bockarie, so-named as he enjoyed drinking the blood of his victims during the Sierra Leone civil war. His boss and mentor, then-President Charles Taylor, sent me his body on my birthday, May 29, 2003. I demanded the body when I learned that Bockarie had been killed "resisting arrest" after I publicly called on Taylor to hand over Bockarie alive to be tried on an international indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We would learn later during the autopsy of the remains that Bockarie had been shot, most likely by a firing squad of five gunmen. He was struck five times in the chest around his heart, ending the life of one of those who, as battle group commander of the infamous Revolutionary United Front (RUF), bore the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity. We also learned that Taylor had ordered the deaths of Bockarie's entire family during those fateful days. We never found the bodies.

I publicly unsealed Taylor's indictment just a few days after receiving my special birthday gift on June 4, 2003,

causing him to be removed from power in disgrace as an indicted war criminal — a fitting response to his birthday gift to me indeed. Jumping ahead nine years almost to the day, Taylor has now been sentenced to 50 years of imprisonment for aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone.

This vignette is a small footnote in the ten-year horror that was Sierra Leone, of which Taylor played such an important role along with his fellow presidents: Muammar Gaddafi and Blaise Campore. This joint criminal enterprise saw the destruction and forcible displacement of millions of human beings. Many of these victims died in unspeakable ways. Taylor's "gift" demonstrates the callous disregard to life and humanity that was pervasive during his reign of terror.

As this dark chapter in the history of Sierra Leone closes, it is now also time to consider justice for the people of Liberia who suffered terribly under Taylor. He allegedly destroyed tens of thousands of his own citizens. They, too, deserve justice and an accounting. Though I do not contemplate another international trial, I do believe an internationalized domestic court in Liberia could be a viable model to bring those accountable for destroying Liberia in the 1990s to justice. This cannot be overlooked, despite the desire to do so. Just because Taylor has been fairly and openly

tried, convicted, and sentenced before the world for what he did to Sierra Leone does not give the international community, or the Liberian government, a pass on seeking justice for Liberia. A considered process needs to begin soon.

As I stated in my opening statement [PDF] in the joint criminal trial of the

leadership of the Civil Defense Force:

A people have stood firm, shoulder to shoulder, staring down the beast, the beast of impunity. The jackals of death, destruction, and inhumanity are caged behind the bars of hope and reconciliation. It is now time to put those who destroyed Liberia behind those bars.



David Crane

David Crane is a Professor of Practice at Syracuse University College of Law. He teaches international criminal law, international humanitarian law and national security law. He was the founding Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone from 2001-2005. Crane served over 30 years in the US federal government, holding numerous key managerial positions and also serving as the Waldemar A. Solf Professor of International Law at the US Army Judge Advocate General's School.

Suggested citation: David Crane, Seeking Justice for Liberia: Reflections of a Prosecutor, JURIST - Forum, June 3, 2012.

Awoko

Wednesday, 13 June 2012

As Amputees get Office...

1,138 war victims to get social security allowances

By Poindexter Sama

It was at the official opening of the newly built and first of its kind office yesterday at Aberdeen Road, when information of social security allowance about to be ditched out to amputees was received with thunderous applause by amputees who suffered the brunt of the 11 year civil war.

Amadu Bangura who is NaCSA's Programme Manager for Reparation while making a keynote remark in addressing the conditions of the amputees has said that the government, in its effort to actualized recommendations made in the Truth and Reconciliation Report, is mapping out ways to ensure that amputees receive pension or social security benefit starting next year.

While according praises on the

ultramodern structure put in place by the Norwegian Friends of Sierra Leone, the Programme Manager said that they as government parastatal working to ensure the social livelihood of the amputees will use the avenue to reach out to programmes, especially those that are geared towards the welfare of amputees in the country.

He said they as stakeholders are seriously concerned with their welfare bearing in mind the deplorable conditions of the amputees since the war came to an end. He said the benefits will be given to enable them address their domestic problems of various sort.

Mr. Bangura added that while they remain committed to addressing those issues that led to the 11 year war, they are not equally oblivious of those who face its brutality, and

will always do bring programmes that will appease their plights.

Earlier on, Mr. Bangura explained, the amputees and war wounded received some assistance in the sum of Le 300,000 each in 2009. He said in 2011, they specifically gave the amputees Le 9,040,500 each and starting from June this year all those who had not received before are going to benefit in the sum of Le 300,000 each. But he noted that they have been addressing other needs of the amputees including health, removal of bullets, attending to gynecological problems and proving other facilities.

The Country Director of Norwegian Friends of Sierra Leone, Ms. Elise Schanke while commending the government for "the collaborative role" it has played over the years, declaring that seven hundred houses have been handed over to members of the Amputees and War Wounded Association.

Handing over the "special house" Ms. Schanke declared, "Today, a special house, an office, is going to be handed over to the association;

and the office is a gift from the board of the Norwegian Friends", adding, "now I have the board and the donor with me, I wish that this office can serve as a platform for peace and reconciliation."

As a way of motivating the amputees for their tolerance and perseverance over the years, Ms. Schanke noted that from the first day of the project, the amputees have always been involved and that she does not look upon the beneficiaries as war victims but survivors, considering the fact that they have been able to manage their lives and fight for their rights, against violence where the need arises since the end of the war.

The President of the Amputees and War Wounded Association Edward Conteh said that he was overwhelmed with the facilities provided for them as, according to him, the project has been his aspiration since he was elected.

He maintained that the office would be used as a place to strategize their activities specifically those that are geared towards development, addressing

the concerns of the membership and reaching out to local and international organizations for assistance.

Mr. Conteh revealed that processes leading to the construction of the office were not an easy task; taking into account meeting the demands of the donor and securing documents that are of relevance in putting up an office. The office therefore, upon conclusion, has three rooms, a conference room three toilets, a store, a kitchen store and a kitchen.

However, the ceremony yesterday was attended by amputee group representatives from all over the country who expressed delight over the new structure they have acquired. But concerns were made clear on their time frame of their social security allowances which they loudly stated is too long. Some of them, while Mr. Bangura made mentioned of their benefits said that the government has been given them false dates for their benefits. But they all expressed hope that the date this time around would be one to reckon with.

The New Dawn (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 13 June 2012

Liberia: The Taylor Verdict - a Fair Result but a Highly Flawed Process

By Dr. Philippa Atkinson

Opinion

The recent verdict and sentencing in the long-running trial for war crimes of former president and notorious warlord Charles Taylor by the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone has sparked a flurry of news reports, comment and internet chatter, but rather less informed analysis. This article aims to assess the verdict and offer a measured appraisal of the issues of concern in an attempt to balance the overly emotional opinions on offer from both Taylor's supporters and detractors.

My own considered view as a longtime observer of the country and student of its history is that notwithstanding the many serious flaws of the process by which Taylor has been judged, the verdict delivered by the court is the right one, reflecting the true extent of his role in the conflict in Sierra Leone and of his relationship with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

As the judges found, Taylor did aid and abet these two groups in their efforts to gain and retain power and associated commission of atrocities against the civilian populations, providing 'sustained and significant' support by supplying them with arms and ammunition in exchange for diamonds and helping to plan specific attacks including the horrific assault on Freetown in January 1999. He also served as a mentor figure to their leaders, particularly Sam Bokarie aka Mosquito, with whom he maintained close radio contact and hosted in Monrovia.[1]

However, and crucially, the judges also concluded that while Taylor's support was important to the rebel forces, it was not ultimately an instrumental factor in the conflict, as Taylor did not command or direct its course, nor was he involved in the initial conceptualizing of the incursion in Libya in the late 1980s. As pointed out by commentators on the Sierra Leone conflict as well as by Taylor's defense barrister Courtenay Griffiths, the excessive focus on Taylor's role has helped to obscure analysis of the internal historical dynamics which have of course been the major determining factors shaping the country's conflict, a process that is captured effectively by the local expression 'moving the body next door and hoping not to smell it'. It is important to restore these internal factors to their rightful central place in understanding the Sierra Leone conflict, including in particular the political economy of diamond extraction as well as the legacy of the country's colonial and post-colonial history.

The sentence Taylor received from the court of 50 years may be seen as somewhat excessive in relation to this more limited judgment of his culpability as compared to the allegations of the prosecution of a joint criminal enterprise with the RUF, and it may end up being reduced on appeal.

Misleading and unhelpful reporting

But while the ruling that Taylor did aid and abet but not command and control the neighboring rebel groups does appear to reflect fairly well the fundamental realities of the conflict, much of the nuance of the judges' findings has been lost in the hyperbole and half-truths that have dominated international reporting and commentary on the case, and which have served to hinder rather than enlighten understanding. The prosecutor herself has contributed to the confusion through her continued references to Taylor's 'proxy' forces, a clearly untenable description given the court's conclusion and one which does nothing to facilitate better understanding of the internal dynamics of the Sierra Leone conflict.

Such inaccuracies are compounded by the incendiary language of many media reports, with the portrayal of Taylor as a 'caged cannibal'[2] who presided over drug-crazed, wig-wearing child soldiers strangely at odds with the lucid and smart character who made his own case so eloquently in court.

Daily Observer (Liberia)

Tuesday, 12 June 2012

PUL Hosts War Crimes Court's Chief Prosecutor

The Chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone is expected today, June 12, to address a special edition of the Press Union of Liberia intellectual discourse, the Edward Wilmot Blyden Forum.

Brenda Hollis arrived in the Country at the weekend as part of the outreach activities of the Special Court and will address the forum at the University of Liberia Auditorium beginning at 11:00 before departing for Sierra Leone.

Ms. Hollis has spent the last two days in Liberia speaking about the Taylor trial following the fifty-year sentencing of the former Liberian President for aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone.

PUL says today's forum is expected to deal with some of the critical opinions of Liberians regarding the Taylor trial in relations to the fight to end impunity in the region and restore justice.

The Union invites journalists, legal minds, students, civil society actors, government officials and the public at large to participate in the discussions.

Heritage (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 13 June 2012

Liberia: Taylor's Appeal Judgment Due Next Year

The appeal verdict against the 50- year- jail sentence of former Liberian President Charles G. Taylor is due next year, the Chief Prosecutor of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, Madam Brenda Hollis, has disclosed.

It can be recalled trial judges found Mr. Taylor guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes in Sierra Leone and subsequently sentenced him to a 50-year- prison term.

However, his defense team termed the decision by the trial judges as excessive and announced an appeal before the appeal chamber of the Special Court.

The Prosecution, on the other hand, said it is considering appealing against the verdict because Mr. Taylor deserves more prison sentence.

Speaking Tuesday, June 12, 2012 when she addressed the Special Edition of the Edward Wilmot Blyden lecture forum at the University of Liberia (UL) main campus on Capitol Hill, Monrovia, Chief Prosecutor Hollis said the appeal chamber's verdict will be based on whether the defense team of former President Taylor or the prosecution can prove that there was an error in the trial judges' verdict.

She stressed that the appeal chamber could either increase, withhold or reduce the 50-year- jail sentence imposed by the trail judges if the prosecution and the Defense can establish fault in the ruling of the trial chamber.

Following the outcome of the appeal case by the appeal chamber, the chief prosecutor said the president of the Special Court would determine where Mr. Taylor would serve his prison term.

She said the determination of the Court's President would be based on agreements between the Special Court and countries that have offered to host Mr. Taylor [as a prisoner].

According to Madam Hollis, only the United Kingdom, based on an agreement with the UN-backed Special Court, has offered to host Mr. Taylor [as a prisoner].

But she expressed optimism that at the end of the year other countries will agree to host him [Taylor] as a prisoner.

The New Dawn
Wednesday, 13 June 2012

Appeal Chamber Could Overturn Verdict

Othello B. Garblah

Ex-president Charles Taylor is said to be hopeful that judges at the Appeal Chamber of the UN backed special court for Sierra Leone would see sufficient reason in his appeal to overturn the verdict which saw him being sentenced for 50 years.



Two weeks after he was found guilty of “aiding and abetting” the Sierra Leone brutal civil conflict on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, Taylor was sentenced to 50 years imprisonment. Prosecutors had earlier sought for a sentence of 80 years, a precedent; they said was aimed at deterring future war crimes.

But speaking to this paper Tuesday via mobile phone from The Hague, Taylor’s new lead Defense Counsel for Appeal, Morris Anyah said his client is optimistic that the Appeal Chamber could overturn the verdict of Trial Chamber II in his favor.

“He (Taylor) is resolute that if we continue to push this appeal, something could come from out of it,” Anyah quoted Taylor as saying. “Taylor is optimistic” he said.

Anyah said Taylor has continued to play an active role in his trial though he (Taylor) like the entire defense team was “obviously disappointed with the ruling,” but that he is well and is looking forward to the appeal hearing. He further told this paper that the defense team has begun the Appeal process.

The court’s ground rule requires that an appeal be filed within 14-days of judgment. But he said his team has filed a petition before the Appeal Chamber, requesting that the defense be given additional time- at least five weeks to file its appeal, which should be on the 19 of July, 2012.

Though the Trial Chamber is yet to rule on the defense’s request, Anyah said the Prosecution has responded to the defense request before the Appeal Chamber, but (prosecution) countered that instead of five weeks, they (prosecution) agreed for three weeks.

Meanwhile, Anyah said the Special Court has scheduled a status conference, which is a pretrial conference for June 18 to be presided over by its newly appointed President Justice Shireen Avis Fisher.

According to Anyah, neither the Defense nor Prosecution will be able to file an appellant brief on time. Therefore, both sides will be requesting for additional time. He said the request for additional time is the reflection of how massive the judgment is.

The process of filing of briefs and replies could take about two months before oral arguments can be entertained, while the entire appeal process could take between six to nine months, Anyah added.

Taylor, 64, is the first head of state convicted by an international court since the Nuremberg trial in 1946. The accused has been found responsible for aiding and abetting some of the most heinous crimes in human history," Judge Richard Lussick said.

Announcing Taylor's prison term on May 30, Justice Lussick said the Trial II Chambers found that Taylor abused of position as President of Liberia to aid and abet the commission of crimes in Sierra Leone and abused his position as a member of ECOWAS Committee of five (later six), which "was" part of the process relied on by the international community to bring peace to Sierra Leone was aggravating factor of great weight.

Judges cited the extra-territoriality of Taylor's act and his exploitation of the Sierra Leone conflict for financial gains as aggravating factor considered in the sentencing, Justice Lussick said.

He said the Trial Chamber II also took into account the report of Taylor's good conduct in detention, but otherwise rejected a number of mitigating factors proposed by the defense.

But the defense argument is that the 50-year sentence is a life sentence for someone age 64. The defense had hoped that judges would take into account the fact that Taylor has a family: he is a father of 14 children and an educated man.

The Inquirer

Wednesday, 13 June 2012

Taylor Could Get Less Sentence If...

If all goes well after the defense and prosecution teams must have submitted a written notice of appeal within 14 days of the delivery of the full judgment and sentence of Mr. Charles Taylor, it is likely that the former Liberian President could get less or more years of sentence, the Chief Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone Ms. Brenda Hollis said.

Addressing hundreds of students at the University of Liberia (UL) yesterday at a special edition of the Edward Wilmot Blyden Forum organized by the Press Union of Liberia (PUL), Ms. Hollis explained that after the appeals chamber has received all of the submissions, it will schedule an appeal hearing for oral arguments from both team.

At that moment, Ms. Hollis narrated that the prosecution team could argue before the appealing chambers to increase the 50-year sentence of Mr. Taylor, while the defense council could also argue in order to reduce his sentence.

Ms. Hollis said the five judges selected to serve in the appealing chambers will begin their deliberations; make a draft judgment and schedule a date for delivery of the appeal judgment.

"The judgment is what a majority of the judges decide. The judgment may affirm, reverse or revise the judgment of the Trial Chamber," Ms. Brenda Hollis said.

The Chief Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone added that if the appeal chamber reverses an acquittal on any count, then the appeal chamber will sentence the accused for that offence and the sentence of the appeal chamber will be enforced immediately.

Commenting further on the guilty verdict, Ms. Hollis disclosed that Mr. Taylor did not physically commit a crime in Sierra Leone but that he is responsible for what happened in that country under an operation named and styled "No Living Thing".

She also revealed that "Aiding and Abetting" a crime the prosecution placed on Mr. Taylor just when the verdict was being announced in the Hague is not a charge instead it was in support of the crimes for which the accused had been jailed for the past six years.

Mr. Charles Taylor was found guilty on April 26, 2012 on all 11 counts in the indictment which earlier said he bore the greatest responsibility for what occurred during the civil crises in Sierra Leone. The judges found that he had planned, and also aided and abetted rebels in committing crimes during the conflict in Sierra Leone. The judges said the prosecution had failed to prove that he had a superior or subordinate relationship with the rebels, or that he had entered a joint criminal enterprise to commit the crime.

Mr. Taylor's sentence was brought down on Wednesday, May 30, 2012 in The Hague. Before his sentence, the lawyers for the prosecution and defence presented oral arguments on their sentencing briefs in front of the judges. The prosecution recommended an 80-year sentence. The defense argued that that was too long, and called for a sentence which would not be in effect for a life sentence.

Charles Taylor was indicted on March 7, 2003, but the indictment was kept under seal until June 4, 2003, an indictment he had pleaded 'not guilty' to. He stepped down as President of Liberia two months later, and went into exile in Nigeria. He was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Special Court on March 29, 2006. The trial opened on June 4, 2007, but was immediately adjourned following the prosecution's opening statement after Mr. Taylor dismissed his counsel. The trial resumed with new defense counsel on January 7, 2008.

Daily Trust (Abuja)

Wednesday, 13 June 2012

Nigeria: Whither African Leadership?

By Timawus Mathias

What got me thinking of the worsening sad commentary of African Leadership was the sight of Charles Taylor, former Liberian warlord being sentenced last week at The Hague for his misadventure with power.

He had directly or indirectly caused the gruesome inhumanity witnessed in Sierra Leone during the 1991 - 2002 civil war! The judge quipped while delivering the sentence that "while Charles Taylor never set foot in Sierra Leone, his heavy footprint is there!"

Throughout the damning judgement delivered as deliberately as if it was God's Judgement day, Charles Taylor's face did not betray his emotions. I could only imagine his reflective thoughts - how on earth that all this happened under his watch, which was assumed with the noblest of intentions!

Soon on the heels of the Taylor sentencing to 50 years, which for a man his age amounts to life incarceration, a court in Cairo sentenced Egypt's former President Hosni Mubarak, to life imprisonment for complicity in the killing of demonstrators during last year's uprising. Over 850 protesters were killed by security forces and hence the current upheaval in Egypt where the people had desired a death sentence.

Earlier in February, we had witnessed in Senegal how the President over 80 year old Abdullahi Wade nearly plunged the country into a civil war in order to contest an unconstitutional third term and was strongly ousted by a politically enlightened people, surrendering to his clear thrashing at the polls by his one-time protégé Macky Sall.

Not to forget quickly the bizarre case of President Laurent Gbagbo, 65, in Ivory Coast, who refused to step down and hand over to the clear winner of the Presidential election, Alassane Ouattara, preferring instead a civil war in which many vulnerable Ivoirians died. Of course the whole world witnessed the flushing out of Laurent Gbagbo from a bunker and his capture out at sleeves like a disgraced common thief, when the Republican Forces laid siege on the Presidential Palace and raided it to capture the former Head of State.

In one year we have seen the disastrous ousting of leaders, Tunisia, where Abidine Ben Ali was forced to flee to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, where Hosni Mubarak resigned forcibly and is now in a local jail for a life sentence, and demonstrations on the streets of Cairo by Egyptians who want a tooth for a tooth. We also had Libya, where Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown and killed on live cell phone video! In Yemen, President Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced to transfer power to Mansur al-Hadi amidst violence with high fatality of citizens, as well as Algeria, and more recently, Mali, where President Amadou Toumani Toure resigned to coupists, leaving a trail of deplorable uncertainty for the African country.

I may have by now gotten you thinking and wondering what on earth has happened to African leadership. Why has democracy suffered such affliction on the continent? And in particular, our country Nigeria, why are we so highly blessed and yet so poorly endowed in visionary leadership?

African leaders have generally taken off on a high note, whether as a replacement of the colonialists or as coupists who have toppled regimes on the continent. The first noticeable defect is a lack of capacity to appreciate and articulate the condition of state, and much less, draw up a road map for meeting aspirations.

At the risk of blatant generalisation, African leaders seek office as patriots but soon upon assuming the mantle of leadership, cocoon themselves in ethnic cabals, abhorring technocrats, and not minding competence. And even when they succeed in recruiting technocrats to serve in their regimes, they all including the most idealistic of them balk under the weight and pressure of corruption and in their smear, join the powers to lord it over the people, in compromise of all the ideals for which they were known.

Of course, they sooner than later fail to deliver and as a scholar captured it, "African leadership could not retain let alone increase, the little that it inherited. In fact corrupt leadership destroys all - the inherited infrastructure - (roads, bridges, schools, universities, hospitals, telephone and communication services, and even the civil service machinery) are now in shambles". This is our tragedy. At the price of good leadership, we retrogress in the name of growth, and become just numb to the suffering of the common poor, even to the extent of instigating communal feuds that divert attention from the failure and shortcomings of leadership.

Africa's leadership, almost across the board, has proved incapable of responding to the laid down constitutional provisions that are sworn to in order to assume public office, choosing instead to subvert the process in order to forcibly retain power. Internal democracy and due process is thrown to the wind in a vicious effort to obliterate contention and opposition. The party machinery is undermined by a refusal to allow role definition other than support of status quo, and the vital institutions of the Legislature, the Judiciary, the Security and the Media are all subverted using corrupt appliances to submit to the hegemony of democratic terror. It is so evident on the continent that transition from one regime to another through a democratic process has become impossible, whereas a won second term in a stipulated tenure is almost always without credibility. Thus a second tenure is painful and unbearable to a stifled and suffocating opposition.

Worse still, they establish hegemony against all the norms and to cap it, attempt to also establish a dynasty. Imagine that Hosni Mubarak ruled Egypt for over 40 years just as did Muammar Gaddafi and were both resistant to obvious and clearly necessary change until it became violent and deadly. What caused the brigandage in Liberia leading up to Charles Taylor being jailed for the despicable footprint he left in Sierra Leone without ever setting foot in that country?

The shame of democracy on the continent is the fact that emerging African leaders are well versed in Western learning, and have glaring spectacles of exemplary leaders on the globe to emulate, yet they leave behind such shameful record of leadership without vision or mission. To think that for years running now, no African head of state has qualified for the continent's highest leadership prize - the Mo Ibrahim African Prize for Leadership.

Now we are at a loss of what to do especially in Nigeria, where the operation of federalism has given some governors the wherewithal to run their states like personal goldmines. Accountability and due process are thrown to the dogs. Painful is when we see a flash in the pan, where a few of the Governors do get it right, and within the Federalism, deliver sound dividends and establish successful democratic entities. Indeed, some have got it right whereas for others, the story is simply that of pillage and inconsistency with internal contention completely beaten to pulp.

Makes you wonder who to blame. In the past, monarchies were vilified and condemned for misrule and inhumanity and the royalty was derailed and stripped of power to free the common folk popularly referred to in the North of Nigeria as talakawa. Today, it is the descendants of commoners the talakawa that are Governors, Legislators, Judges, Military and Security chiefs et al, yet, the common man, the talaka, has found no succour and is living a life of bearing the brunt of inept and uncaring leadership. Who is to blame, is what I now wonder.

ET TU, FAROUK LAWAN!

I was willing to stand with Hon. Farouk Lawan up to the end. But time has been chiselling at the seemingly astute legislator. Now both of us bite the dust and sink in it. When it clears, I might be able to say if democracy's death knell has not been driven in too deep by whoever masterminded the \$600,000 bribe gambit. Now I say part of the Lord's Prayer more fervently - "Lead us not unto temptation, and deliver us from evil".

New York Post
Wednesday, 13 June 2012

The ‘international justice’ delusion

Benny Avni

The war in Syria widens by the day; yesterday, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted that Russia is supplying the regime with attack helicopters. But, hey, Western diplomats plan to propose a tough new UN resolution. It may even include the “nuclear option”: referring suspected Syrian war criminals for trial in The Hague.

Yes, our side is talking about carrying a plastic spoon to a gun fight.

The only thing that matches the faith we invest in the nascent international justice system is that system’s futility.



The latest cause for faith: In April, an international tribunal convicted Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president, of raping and murdering his way through a war in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Luis Moreno Ocampo

But it took the tribunal 10 years to convict Taylor. And even that would’ve been impossible without the outside military intervention that ended the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia and edged Taylor out of power.

Yet the believers somehow still think international law can someday soon replace armies as a way to end disputes.

The leader of the efforts to make that dream come true, Luis Moreno Ocampo, spelled it out last week at the United Nations, at a press conference marking his departure after nine years in the top job at the Hague-based International Criminal Court.

“The way to have a civilization is to have rules — it’s not to kill,” Ocampo told me, citing the example of a tiny country that decided it didn’t need a military: “Costa Rica is saying, we use the law to protect our land and our people. The biggest countries use armies to protect their land and their people,” he said.

So who’s right? Ocampo promises that in no time we’d all see Costa Rica’s wisdom. “In 40 years all of us will be together,” he says.

What makes his Kumbaya prediction less than credible is Ocampo’s record as the first ICC prosecutor: As legal scholar Eric Posner points out in *The Wall Street Journal*, in the court’s first decade, with a budget over \$100 million a year, the Ocampo-led team of 700 staffers managed to win one conviction.

One.

Nevertheless, the Security Council keeps referring cases to The Hague, where legal minds deliberate and issue indictments on war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

In 2008, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir became the first head of state so indicted. Surprise: He's still running Sudan. Four years later, his goons are still at it, re-escalating the genocide in Darfur and threatening to reignite war against newly-free South Sudan.

"We can do better," insists Ocampo. "In a few years, when justices say this person is indicted, the world will say yes — and it's the end of this person in power."

In how many years? The ICC indictment didn't prompt anyone to arrest Bashir; instead, several of Sudan's neighbors and allies hosted him as a visiting head of state.

A similar ICC indictment against Moammar Khadafy was a bit more successful. After decades of abuse, Libya's strongman is no longer — but he never set foot in The Hague. Rather, he was killed during a civil war that the West opted to intervene in.

America's appetite for Ocampo's dream is strictly limited. President Bill Clinton signed the Rome Treaty that established the ICC, but couldn't get the Senate to ratify it.

And President George W. Bush withdrew America's signature — but his administration declined to veto the Security Council vote that referred Bashir to The Hague.

It was a classic case of the true value of "international justice": We're not going to war over this, but feel bad about turning a blind eye to suffering. Voila: We're doing . . .something.

President Obama is much more attuned to Ocampo-think: Current UN Ambassador Susan Rice enthusiastically raised her hand for the UN resolution that sent Khadafy's case to the ICC.

Good thing we sent NATO in, too — or Khadafy might still be chatting on the phone with Bashar Assad.

Put aside The Hague's incompetence, ill-defined rules and all the rest. International law can never replace war because no justice system can function without the cops who catch the perps and haul them to the courthouse. Twitter: @bennyavni

Read more:

http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/the_international_justice_delusion_0iRJ5iyECV0ogZ1QGXD4QJ#ixzz1xfQHbFYv

Commonwealth Secretariat

Wednesday, 30 May 2012

Statement by Commonwealth Secretary-General on the sentencing of Charles Taylor

"While Liberia is not a Commonwealth country, the victims of Taylor's crimes come from Sierra Leone, one of our member states, and this verdict speaks to our core values of ensuring justice and adherence to the rule of law" - Kamalesh Sharma

Welcoming the sentencing today by the Special Court for Sierra Leone of former Liberian leader Charles Taylor to 50 years' imprisonment, Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma said:

"This is a most positive development and a significant step forward by the international community in concretely upholding the international rule of law, a priority concern for the Commonwealth and its citizens. While Liberia is not a Commonwealth country, the victims of Taylor's crimes come from Sierra Leone, one of our member states, and this verdict speaks to our core values of ensuring justice and adherence to the rule of law.

"Together with our member states, the Commonwealth Secretariat is committed to ending impunity and sending a clear message that grave crimes against humanity will not be tolerated. This verdict shows the resolve of the international community to hold accountable those individuals who commit the worst crimes known to mankind, namely, war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The Commonwealth will continue to support the work of the International Criminal Courts and Tribunals and take practical action through its worldwide network to uphold democracy and end tyranny."

Contact: Richard Uku, Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, London, tel. +44 (0) 20 7747 6380, email: r.uku@commonwealth.int