

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



See more photos from today's MONBATT medal parade in the '*Special Court Supplement*'.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Tuesday, 13 May 2008

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

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Premier News
Tuesday, 13 May 2008

US\$375m Discovered



Special Court building with Charles G. Taylor (inset)

Last year the United Nations Security Council agreed to set up a three-member panel of experts to probe into the 'hidden wealth' of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who has been accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 11-year conflict in Sierra Leone.

According to the Special Court Chief Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, experts are trying to uncover Mr. Taylor's wealth, which they claim he acquired from illegal blood

diamonds and timber trade in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. He says they have located \$375 million being part of Mr Taylor's wealth.

In an interview with

Adolphus Williams the Chief Prosecutor pointed out that they found bank transactions in accounts that were in Taylor's personal name and were

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Charles Taylor

From front Page

being used for his personal purposes. He claims they found two accounts in the US which had \$5 billion of activity, but a lot of it was money moving back and forth between the two accounts in order to maximise daily interest payments. At least \$375 million was however identified as moving out of those accounts into other banks in the US and elsewhere around the world. The Special Court is continuing a tracing exercise following those funds to the present to see how much is left. Even though it is not known how much of this money is left, Stephen Rapp believes there will be some left that could be available to be frozen by the UN and then eventually available, if Taylor is convicted, for reparations for Sierra Leonean victims.

"If we can show money being used to buy arms going to Sierra Leone, money going to the Ukraine or something, that

could help our case. That's why we've been looking at this for a long time. Additionally we have the right, if we obtain a conviction for the crime of pillage, to obtain a forfeiture order equal to the amount of property pillaged from Sierra Leonean victims. And we're presenting evidence about diamond pillage, there's a particular shipment that we have evidence about which was taken from Johnny Paul Koroma that was about 1,900 diamonds that we think have been valued at several million dollars. If we can prove in the end of the day that Taylor pillaged diamonds from Sierra Leone we can get a forfeiture order against him."

Responding to a question about how he would determine the source of the money (Liberia or Sierra Leone) to decide which country should get the

money back, Rapp admits that it will be a difficult exercise. He says

"what I'm hoping on, and when I meet with Liberian and with Sierra Leone authorities I discuss ways that we could share the gains, so to speak. At the end of the day it may be difficult to tell whether money in an account came from Sierra Leone diamonds or whether it came from Liberian timber. There may be a case to make in both situations, and the money's been moved around and some has been spent, and all of that. So I think in the end of the day there will be a need to work out a formula for distribution between the two countries. But the critical thing at this point is to locate the funds, because if we locate the funds we can get them frozen by the UN under the Security Council resolution."

Independent Observer
Tuesday, 13 May 2008

Former Liberian VP to testify in Taylor's trial



Charles
Taylor

BY UNISSA BANGURA

Standard Times medium has understood that the former Vice President in Charles Taylor's government, Moses Blah is expected to give evidence in the ongoing trial of Charles Taylor at the Special Court in The Hague any time this week.

According to the Press and Outreach Section of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the former Liberian Vice President has been scheduled to take the witness stand on Tuesday May 13th 2008

in The Hague depending on how long the previous witness will stay in his testimony.

Mr. Blah served as Charles Taylor's Vice President and subsequently became the President of the Republic of Liberia when Taylor left the country on self-exile in Nigeria in

August 2003. Reports state that Moses Blah will be led in evidence by the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court, Mr. Stephen Rapp. He will be the first witness to be led in evidence by the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court.

Sources indicate that the wit-

ness when led in evidence is expected to give background information relating to the accused and the training exercise carried out by Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh in Liberia in the late 1980s.

Other issues expected to be

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Former Liberian VP to testify in Taylor's trial

FROM PAGE 1

thrown light on include the creation, the composition and command structure of the NPFL from the late 1980s and the authority of the accused at that time. The witness is also expected to clear issues such as those relating to the creation of SBU's in the NPFL top brass, the introduction of RUF and its child combatants, the NPFL headquarters and the base

camp in Liberia, the relationship between the accused and the Libyan President, Muammar Al-Ghadafi, President of Burkina Faso Blaise Compaore and the storage of arms and ammunition in Liberia.

Last but not the least, he is expected to clarify issues that relate to the relationship between the accused and leaders of the AFRC/RUF Junta.

Premier News

Tuesday, 13 May 2008



Cont. From last issue

Def: At Zagoda, at Beudu?
 Wit: Yes.
 Def: You said he had the Liberian codes?
 Wit: He had knowledge, but was not the only one.
 Def: [references document] The first entry says 7 July 2006. That was your first meeting with Collott in Kailahun?
 Wit: I can't recall.
 Def: Zedman approached you before you first met with Collott?
 Wit: Yes.
 Def: Did he train you in the RUF?
 Wit: I never said Zedman trained me.
 Def: He was superior to you because he was there first?
 Wit: Yes.
 Def: What was his rank in the RUF?
 Wit: I can't recall exactly the rank he attained.
 Def: What was your highest rank in the RUF?
 Wit: I was a sergeant. When I crossed into Liberia, Yeaten called me a captain of the Signals Unit.
 Def: You told us there were no uniforms or insignia early in the war?
 Wit: Yes.
 Def: So it's not unusual they didn't give you stripes?
 Wit: Not in the early stages.
 Def: Let's go back to Zedman. Yesterday, in passing, you referred to a sergeant approaching you and taking a code book from you?
 Wit: Yes.
 Def: [references document] It says interview of you, 1:57 PM, the date of July 7, 2006; it says by M. Koroma, M. Lamin, and K. Collott. This Koroma mentioned there. Do you recall how that person looks?
 Wit: Black, and fat a little bit.
 Def: They were the three interviewers?
 Wit: Yes.
 Def: On the next page it says: "Witness was approached by Zedman about a month ago (late May?) and after that has never spoken to anyone about testifying." You see?
 Wit: Yes.
 Def: [references another page] "(Refer to composition book made as exhibit and stamped in red ink on front.) Witness acknowledges notebook as his. He tore out some pages he felt were unimportant just before giving it to Sahr James." You see?
 Wit: Yes.
 Def: [references notebook] You told us Tuesday that this was your codebook?
 Wit: I did not say this was the codebook. This is not a codebook.
 Def: This is a book you adopted as yours?
 Wit: I did not adopt it. It is my book. It was with me during the war.
 Def: It is your book?
 Wit: Yes.
 Def: You gave this book to Zedman in May 2006?
 Wit: I can't recall the exact date. The books were collected by Zedman before Collott and others talked with me. When the books were handed over to Zedman, it was some time. Zedman met me and asked to

hand over the documents.

Def: I'm looking for a month, not an exact date. It says you told them it was May. Was it May?

Judge Sebutinde: To be fair to the witness, it doesn't say May, it says "about a month ago".

Wit: I've never been precise in giving dates because I didn't record that.

Def: But you were specific talking about dates in your testimony, like the Freetown invasion?

Wit: I didn't know the dates until they gave them to me.

Def: Going back to the month you gave Zedman this notebook. The investigators wrote you gave it to them in May 2006. Are you saying that's a mistake?

Wit: I told them about a month.

Def: About a month before July 2006 you gave Zedman that book?

Wit: I don't want to be precise about the exact number of days, weeks or months. Zedman got in touch with me. I didn't know he was in touch with Collott and others.

Def: When Zedman took this exercise book, it was during the rainy season of 2006, yes?

Wit: Not in the rainy season.

Def: Then why did they write you gave it to him in May 2006?

Wit: I didn't give a specific date.

Def: After Taylor's detention in March 2006, Zedman comes to collect your code book?

Wit: Not my code book. My operational book, and some personal books.

Def: Disarmament took place you said in 2002 or late 2001. Which is it?

Wit: It was in late 2001.

Def: And you retained these books after the war until 2006 when Zedman came to get them?

Wit: Yes, together with a scrapped radio, which is now in the possession of Sahr James.

Def: In Kailahun?

Wit: Yes.

Def: He lives in Kailahun?

Wit: Yes.

Def: Who was present?

Wit: I can't recall.

Def: What did he tell you he needed the books for?

Wit: He didn't say. He only asked for them. One other commander, had already collected one book. It was "Liberty", Moijuch Koroma.

Def: When did Liberty come?

Wit: In 2003. He wanted to work with the NGO IRC. He met me

and asked for my notebook that had some messages and other documents in it.

Def: Then Zedman came and said he wanted your operational books?

Wit: He came and asked if I had my signal documents, and I gave it to him with the scrapped radio.

Def: That book was important to you?

Wit: Otherwise I would not have kept it.

Def: Did you ask Zedman why he wanted this book of importance to you?

Wit: I did not tell him.

Def: You simply gave him the book?

Wit: Yes.

Def: How long afterwards were you contacted by Chuck Collott?

Wit: Over a month.

Def: How?

Wit: I saw Zedman in a vehicle at the secondary school. He said they wanted to talk to me. I refused. Later I agreed to meet them at the Daru Trading Center in Kailahun.

Def: Zedman and them? You're referring of Zedman with Collott, Koroma and Magnus?

Wit: Yes.

Def: So four men, one of which was Zedman, took you to Daru Trading Center?

Wit: Yes.

Def: Zedman was your superior officer in the RUF?

Wit: Yes.

Def: When you went there, what did they tell you their purpose in meeting with you was?

Wit: To get information from me about activities with the war, when Zedman worked together with me.

Def: And within 10 days of that meeting you went to Freetown?

Wit: They gave me money for transport to travel to Freetown. I don't know the dates.

Def: You see the interview dates in the document. Does that look right to you?

Wit: Taking that date into account, it should be 10 days.

Def: You said Tuesday that you kept all your books with you until the last day of disarmament?

Wit: These books requested by Sahr James were with me until disarmament and even after disarmament.

Def: You told us [reads from transcript of April 8]: "I had my notebook until the last day of disarmament. At some point my former sergeant requested those materials." You remember saying that?

Wit: [silence]

Judge Doherty: Did you understand the question?

Def: Did you say this to us? [reads quote again]

Wit: I said my note that I had, which later was reproduced by a girl who wanted to be trained in signals. The old one was discarded.

Def: Did you keep all your books through disarmament?

Wit: Not all of them.

Def: The book was reproduced by Rebecca?

Wit: Yes.

Def: Did you tear out some pages from this book?

Wit: Yes, I did.

Def: If you look at the cover, it says 96 pages. Ordinarily this book would have 96 pages?

Wit: Yes.

Def: We counted the pages, as did the prosecution, and there are 46, yes?

Wit: You have to give me a chance to count. [sound of pages turning can be heard] 42.

Def: So with the two covers, 44 by your count?

Wit: Yes.

Def: What happened to 52 pages from this book?

Wit: The messages you had there had long been written on pages in this book in code. Those messages were transcribed. The transcription was done in this book and later replicated just exactly transcribed. The ones I had transcribed - I discarded the coded message and had this one written in simple English?

Cont. Next issue

BBC World Service Trust

Monday, 12 May 2008

Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor's war crimes trial takes on a striking session this week when Moses Blah takes his seat at the witness desk to give evidence in the trial.

Blah, Liberia's Former President himself has had long standing ties with Taylor dating back to the founding of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, NPFL.

And many believe his appearance will be quite revealing as he's expected to give evidence on wide range of events relating to Taylor's charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

So what Taylor and his legal defence team make of Blah's expected testimony? Adolphus Williams joins us from The Hague with this report.

WILLIAMS: The office of Chief Prosecutor, Steven Rapp, says Blah will speak to circumstances surrounding the alleged killings of RUF frontline commander, Sam Bockarie and AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma in Liberia by personnel subordinate to the accused Taylor.

According to law Charles Taylor himself is not allowed to speak, but one of his lawyers, Terry Munyard, says Taylor and his Defence team have nothing to fear as long as Mr. Blah will say nothing else but the truth.

MUNYARD: We're perfectly happy to have former President Blah's evidence, and we look forward to hearing it. And our position is that Mr. Blah is simply going to tell the truth and there's nothing to fear.

WILLIAMS: Taylor and Blah are said to have trained in Libya as part of the National Patriotic Front rebels. The Prosecution statement detailing Blah's testimony says the former president will speak on the alleged relationships between the Accused and the leader of Libya as well as the President of Burkina Faso from the late 1980's.

Blah will also speak to alleged atrocities in the camps of the AFRC/RUF rebels and the recruitment of children to fight war.

Munyard claims although the Defence is not frightened by Blah's appearance, he sees one problem: propaganda.

MUNYARD: The problem that we face – both Mr. Taylor and his lawyers – is that there's been a huge, sustained propaganda campaign against him over many years now. And one of the real difficulties is that lots of people can tell you Mr. Taylor is a bad man and he's done awful things, but almost none of them can tell you what it is that he's done. And that's simply because his name has been besmirched over the years in a very unspecified way, in a way that has led people to think if all of these things are being said about him then there must be some truth in them. Now, you will go a long way before you find anyone in the wider world certainly, who holds such views who can actually tell you what it is he's supposed to have done. It's a big propaganda campaign. However, we have faith in the justice of this Court and in particular in the Judges themselves in concentrating only on the evidence and not on the propaganda.

WILLIAMS: Blah's appearance may be delayed if Defence lawyers do not complete the cross-examination of prosecution insider witness Karmoh Kanneh, a former RUF commander. Kanneh has told the Court Taylor provided arms, ammunition and money to enable the RUF to attack Guinea.

KANNEH: One time I was at my base in Pendembu and he invited me, because he was based in Kono. When I went there he told me about the mission. and the reason why the materials were brought. He said Mr Taylor had given those materials and the weapons and that we are to attack Guinea from two flanks from the Sierra Leone end. He said those were the materials and even the money that he had told me about was for that mission. That was what he told me... the trip that we went on we brought with us \$50,000... He said President Taylor had given us the money, together with the materials.

COUNSEL: Who had he given the money to?

KANNEH: Issa Sesay.

BBC World Service Trust, Search for Common Ground, Adolphus Williams, The Hague.

BBC World Service Trust

Monday, 12 May 2008

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Blah, Liberia's former president himself has had long standing ties with Taylor dating back to the founding of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, NPFL.

And many believe his appearance will be quite revealing as he's expected to give evidence on wide range of events relating to Taylor's charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

So what do Taylor and his legal Defence team make of Blah's expected testimony? Alphonsus Zeon of BBC World Service Trust/Search for Common Ground reports.

ZEON: The office of Chief Prosecutor Steven Rapp says Blah will speak to circumstances surrounding the alleged killings of RUF frontline commander Sam Bockarie and AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma in Liberia by personnel subordinate to Taylor.

Charles Taylor himself is not allowed to speak, but one of his lawyers, Terry Munyard, said Taylor and his Defence team have nothing to fear as long as Mr. Blah will say the truth.

MUNYARD: We're perfectly happy to have former President Blah's evidence, and we look forward to hearing it. And our position is that Mr. Blah is simply going to tell the truth and there's nothing to fear.

ZEON: Taylor and Blah are said to have trained in Libya as part of the National Patriotic Front rebels. The Prosecution statement detailing the orbit of Blah's testimony says the former President will speak on the alleged relationships between the Accused and the leader of Libya as well as the President of Burkina Faso from the late 1980's onward.

The office says Blah will also speak to alleged atrocities in the camps of the AFRC/RUF rebels and the recruitment of children to fight war.

Munyard says although the Defence is not frightened by Blah's appearance, he sees one problem .

MUNYARD: The problem that we face – both Mr. Taylor and his lawyers – is that there's been a huge, sustained propaganda campaign against him over many years now. And one of the real difficulties is that lots of people can tell you Mr. Taylor is a bad man and he's done awful things, but almost none of them can tell you what it is that he's done. And that's simply because his name has been besmirched over the years in a very unspecified way, but in a way that has led people to think if all of these things are being said about him then there must be some truth in them. Now, you will go a long way before you find anyone in the wider world certainly, who holds such views who can actually tell you what it is he's supposed to have done. It's a big propaganda campaign. However, we have faith in the justice of this Court and in particular in the Judges themselves in concentrating only on the evidence and not on the propaganda.

ZEON: Blah's appearance may be delayed if Defence lawyers do not complete the cross examination of Prosecution insider witness Karmoh Kanneh.

MUNYARD: I think it's very likely that Mr. Blah will be giving his evidence by Wednesday. Whether it starts tomorrow or doesn't start until Wednesday morning, no one can really predict. Cross-examination is always a bit of a case of being as long as a piece of string. But I'm very confident that Mr. Blah will be in the witness box by Wednesday if not before.

ZEON: A former RUF commander, Witness Kanneh, has told the Court Taylor provided arms, ammunition and money to enable the RUF to attack Guinea.

KANNEH: Mr Taylor had given those materials and the weapons and that we were to attack Guinea from two flanks from the Sierra Leone end. He said those are the materials and even the money that he had told me about was for that mission...We brought with us \$50,000... President Taylor had given us the money, together with the materials.

BBC World Service Trust

Tuesday, 13 May 2008

Crunch time at Taylor trial, but his lawyer says they are confident

By Alphonsus Zeon and Adolphus Williams in The Hague

The former Liberian president Moses Blah is expected to testify on Wednesday 14 at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in the trial of the man he succeeded, Charles Taylor. The two have had a long-standing relationship dating back to the founding of their National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

Blah's appearance may be delayed if defence lawyers do not complete the cross-examination of a prosecution insider witness, Karmoh Kanneh, a former RUF commander.

Many believe the former Liberian president's appearance will be quite revealing as he's expected to give evidence on a wide range of events relating to charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity against his former boss.

The office of the Prosecutor says Mr Blah will speak about circumstances surrounding the killings of RUF battlefield commander, Sam Bockarie and AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma in Liberia allegedly by personnel subordinate to Mr Taylor.

One of Mr Taylor's lawyers, Terry Munyard says Taylor and his Defence team have nothing to fear as long as Mr. Blah will say the truth. He told these reporters, "We're perfectly happy to have former President Blah's evidence, and we look forward to hearing it. And our position is that Mr. Blah is simply going to tell the truth and there's nothing to fear."

However he goes on to say that although they are not frightened by Blah's appearance, he sees one problem. "The problem that we face – both Mr. Taylor and his lawyers – is that there's been a huge, sustained propaganda campaign against him over many years now. And one of the real difficulties is that lots of people can tell you Mr. Taylor is a bad man and he's done awful things. But almost none of them can tell you what it is that he's done. And that's simply because his name has been besmirched over the years in a very unspecified way."

Speaking to these reporters earlier, the prosecutor of the court, Steven Rapp said Mr Blah did not wish to have his identity protected hence would appear under his own name.

The prosecutor said the former Liberian leader had failed to appear earlier because of ill health. "I don't want to discuss people's health if they haven't already, but he [Mr Blah] indicated that he has high blood pressure and that he needed to make sure that that problem is taken care of before he could travel, and that he would have a medical release from his doctor" he said.

He assured that all the issues, including alleged threat made against Mr Blah, had now been resolved.

Moses Blah served as Charles Taylor's vice president and was Taylor's immediate successor as Liberian president when Taylor left Liberia for exile in Nigeria in August 2003.

Blah will be led in evidence by Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court, Stephen Rapp. It will be the first time that Rapp has led a witness in the Taylor trial.

Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground

The Patriotic Vanguard website

Monday, 12 May 2008

Taylor's Vice President arrives at The Hague

- Monday 12 May 2008.

Taylor's former Vice President has arrived at The Hague. The press and outreach office of the Special Court has announced that former Liberian Vice President Moses Blah is now scheduled to take the witness stand on Tuesday, depending on how long the previous witness takes.

Blah served as Charles Taylor's vice president and was Taylor's immediate successor as Liberian president when Taylor left Liberia for exile in Nigeria in August 2003.



Blah will be led in evidence by Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court, Stephen Rapp. It will be the first time that Rapp has led a witness in the Taylor trial.

The court distributed the following summary of topics about which Blah may testify:

The witness may provide evidence in relation to the following:

Personal background information.

Training received by the Accused and Foday Sankoh in Libya in the late 1980's, the Accused authority at that time.

Creation of the NPFL, the composition and command structure of the NPFL from the late 1980's onward, the Accused's control over the NPFL.

Creation of SBUs in the NPFL and the RUF, reasons for using children in the NPFL and RUF.

NPFL headquarters and base camps in Liberia from the late 1980's onward. Relationship between the Accused and the leader of Libya and the President of Burkina Faso from the late 1980's onward.

Libyan assistance to the Accused and to Foday Sankoh from the late 1980's onward, including providing money to the Accused and providing weapons and ammunition or facilitating the Accused's ability to obtain arms and ammunition.

Assistance of the President of Burkina Faso to the Accused from the late 1980's onward, including but not limited to providing arms and ammunition to the Accused, procedure by which such assistance provided.

Storage of arms and ammunition in Liberia .

Relationship between the Accused and leaders of the AFRC/RUF, including but not limited to Foday Sankoh, Sam Bockarie and Issa Sesay, and Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the AFRC/RUF Junta.

Assistance provided by the Accused to the RUF, including but not limited to arms and ammunition, training in Liberia, providing Liberian personnel subordinate to the Accused to fight with the RUF in Sierra Leone, providing guest houses and Liberian escorts in Liberia.

Command structure of the fighters in Sierra Leone in the early to mid 1990's, including the command structure of subordinates of the Accused facilitating the movement of fighters into Sierra Leone .

Crimes against Sierra Leonean civilians committed by Liberian subordinates of the Accused in the early to mid 1990's, including but not limited to killing civilians and looting, the Accused reaction to these crimes.

Travel of AFRC/RUF leaders, including but not limited to Foday Sankoh, Sam Bockarie, Issa Sesay, Johnny Paul Koroma, to Liberia to meet with the Accused and/or his subordinates.

Communications within the NPFL in Liberia regarding activities of the NPFL and RUF, and regarding crimes being committed in Sierra Leone .

The Accused's control over the Liberian armed forces, police, special units after he became President in 1997, command structure among those forces.

The involvement of the AFRC/RUF in supporting the Accused against the LURD and ULIMO.

Circumstance surrounding the killing of Sam Bockarie in Liberia by personnel subordinate to the Accused, including but not limited to the reason for the killing.

Circumstances surrounding the killing of Johnny Paul Koroma, the leader of the AFRC/RUF Junta government, in Liberia by personnel subordinate to the Accused.

M&C News

Tuesday, 13 May 2008

http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/africa/news/article_1404993.php/Former_Liberian_president_to_testify_in_The_Hague_court

Former Liberian president to testify in The Hague court

Amsterdam - Former Liberian president Moses Blah is due to testify in an open session of the ongoing trial against Charles Taylor in the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in The Hague, the court announced in a press statement on Tuesday.

In July 2007, Taylor, also a former Liberian president, was charged with orchestrating war crimes and crimes against humanity during Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war before the United Nations- backed SCSL.

Taylor allegedly backed the rebel forces in Sierra Leone to gain control of the country's diamond mines. In 2003, he went into exile as rebels closed in on the Liberian capital.

Taylor, who entered a plea of not guilty to all charges, is the first president of an African country to be charged with serious crimes under international law by an international criminal court.

The SCSL said Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp would be leading Blah's testimony on Wednesday, which is to be broadcast live on the SCSL website.

The process of calling up witnesses began in January and is due to continue for several more months. In total, 144 witnesses are due to appear before the court in The Hague.

Moses Blah served as Liberia's vice president under Charles Taylor, and became president in August of 2003, following Taylor's departure from the country.

Blah was trained in Libya in the 1980s and was among the founders of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), a rebel group that initiated and participated in the Liberian Civil War.

Blah is expected to testify about the relations between Libya and Liberia during Taylor's presidency.

Libya was allegedly responsible for providing Taylor with weapons and ammunition, later used to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Blah is said to know personally about crimes committed by Taylor's armed forces against Sierra Leonean civilians in the early to mid 1990s, including the killing of civilians as well as looting.

For security reasons, the trial of the former Liberian president is taking place in the Netherlands, in the building of the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
12 May 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Blah Takes Witness Stand in Taylor's Trial Tuesday

(The Inquirer, New Democrat, Liberian Express)

- Former Liberian President Moses Blah is expected to take the witness stand Tuesday in the trial of his predecessor, Charles Taylor. His appearance on the witness stand will depend on how long the current witness would take.
- The Special Court said Mr. Blah who served as Mr. Taylor's Vice President, will be led in evidence by the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court, Mr. Stephen Rapp. It will be the first time that Rapp would lead a witness in the Taylor trial.
- The witness may provide evidence in relation to the following: personal background information; training received by the accused and Foday Sankoh in Libya in the late 1980; the creation of the NPFL; the composition and command structure of the NPFL from the late 1980 onward among others. Mr. Blah announced recently that he has been subpoenaed by the Special Court to testify against his former boss. He told a news conference at the time that if he fails to honour the subpoena, he may face seven years imprisonment by the court.

Angry Residents Vandalize Rice Depot in Ganta

(Daily Observer)

- An incident of violence was reported in Ganta, Nimba County, where the Daily Observer says some angry citizens last Wednesday vandalized a rice depot, few kilometers from the main port of entry after suspecting that the rice had been stored there for onward overnight smuggling into Guinea. It is suspected that the rising price of rice on the Liberian market is largely due to the smuggling of the commodity into neighboring Guinea.

Former Transitional Leader, Speakers, others released to Episcopal Bishop after indictment on Criminal Charges

(National Chronicle, Liberian Express, The News and Heritage)

- According to media reports, the Criminal Court 'C' last week released former transitional leader Gyude Bryant and ex-speaker Edwin Snowe and three others to the custody of Episcopal Bishop Jonathan Hart. The court indicted them for theft of property, bribery, economic sabotage and criminal conspiracy following a suit filed by government which accuses them of embezzling more than US\$900,000 during the transitional period.

President Sirleaf Tours Facilities of two Key Concessions

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf over the weekend visited the operation areas of two concession companies in Grand Bassa Counties. The two companies are Arcelor Mittal and the Buchanan Renewable Energy (BRE), where she inspected the facilities of these companies and held talks with officials of the two companies.

- A statement from the President's Press Secretary said during the visit, President Sirleaf urged the authorities of the two companies to ensure that Liberians are placed in high positions of operations. While touring sites hosting the operations of the World Steel giant, Arcelor-Mittal, the President said she was encouraged that the company had stepped up activities surrounding its operations since her visit last year.
- Arcelor-Mittal's General Manager for Projects, Mr. Malvinder Singh, informed the President that his Company has brought in the first consignment of rail and other heavy duty equipment, worth nearly US \$20-million dollars, to begin work on a 260 kilometers rail.
- Also, the statement said President Sirleaf toured an area affected by erosion, urging the management of Arcelor-Mittal to assist local county authorities find temporary solutions, while government finds long-term measures to the erosion threat to Buchanan city. "I know that it is not in your operations, but I would ask you to cooperate with our superintendent and try to address some very, very difficult problems here, like the erosion and some of the road that will allow people to have access, without intruding and affecting your operations in anyway or impeding your risk factor," the Liberian leader urged the company.

Citizens Fear Sea Erosion in Buchanan

(Public Agenda)

- Grand Bassa County Representative, Gabriel Smith has revealed that sea erosion is posing serious threat to the citizens of the port city of Buchanan. Addressing reporters at his Capitol Building office recently, the Grand Bassa County District # 4 Representative said residents in the city are living in trepidation. Smith said he is concerned about the lives of the people of Buchanan and called on the government and other international groups to immediately move in to halt the threat posed by the erosion. He quoted the Ministry of Lands Mines and Energy as attributing the cause of the erosion to beach sand mining. In a related development, Representative Smith has warned citizens of Grand Bassa County not to uproot the train rails indicating that he has received information that scrap dealers are threatening the train track that links Buchanan to Yekepa. Smith said the removal of the track is anti-developmental and pointed out that it undermines the progress government and Mittal Steel is trying to make.

Radio Summary

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

Former Transitional Chairman Bryant, others Released to Episcopal Bishop

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

President Sirleaf Issues Two–Month Ultimatum to Mittal Steel to Commence Training of 50 Liberians

- The Executive Mansion has expressed concern over delays by Mittal Steel to commence the training of some 50 Liberians who are to be trained at Arcelor Mittal operations around the world.
- Speaking during a tour of the company's facilities in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said the training of the Liberians is a key part to the company's operations that should be considered.
- President Sirleaf also called on the company to increase the employment of Liberians in significant positions.
- Meanwhile, Mittal says it remains committed to the working climate in the country.

Government Condemns Violent Incident in Maryland County

- The Government of Liberia has condemned the violent incident between the people of Harper and Pleebo Districts in Maryland County. The incident left two persons dead and two others injured.
- The government said it is concerned and disappointed in using violence to resolve disagreement and said it is investigating the incident.

Special Court Supplement
MONBATT Medal Parade
Tuesday, 13 May 2008 at UNIOSIL Headquarters







