

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



Painting the Sierra Leone Peace Museum

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, 12 November 2013

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Outreach and Public Affairs

Local News

God, the Minister of Justice Was With Johnny Paul Koroma / <i>Stand Firm</i>	Page 3
Gender Based Violence Laws Must be Reviewed in Sierra Leone / <i>Standard Times</i>	Page 4
Ivory Coast Opposition to International Court: Release Gbagbo / <i>Concord Times</i>	Page 5

International News

The Taxis Fall Silent / <i>The Economist</i>	Pages 6-7
Renowned Prosecutor Says War Criminals No Longer Heroes / <i>SF Gate</i>	Pages 8-9
Uganda still for international justice, says PMP / <i>New Vision</i>	Page 10
Accused of War Crimes, Kenya's Leaders Cry Racism / <i>The Drum</i>	Pages 11-13
Iringo 'Furious' Over ICC Witness Coaching Claim / <i>Standard Media</i>	Page 14
Kenyan Cuts in Foreign Funding of NGOs Aimed at Silencing Critics-HRW / <i>Reuters</i>	Pages 15-16

Stand Firm

Wednesday, 13 November 2013

GOD, THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE WAS WITH JOHNNY PAUL KOROMA

(Contd from last edition)

Rtd. Lt. Col. Lawrence Salifu Conteh

Startling Revelations!

So the witness said they were forced to make a false statement and requested to make a new one since the first was under duress, they too confessed that Staff Sgt. Lamin did not attempt to escape. He was tortured and beaten to death by the Nigerian investigators because he refused to make a false statement to implicate Johnny Paul Koroma.

In another encounter, WOII Abdul requested to make a fresh statement because of the duress he was subjected to and since the court and Lawyer had advocated for a fresh statement.

The court moved to ex president Momoh's house at Juba Hill to verify whether the killing was justified. The court discovered that Staff Sgt. Lamin did not die as alleged by jumping through the window. He was killed by the Nigerians. For Ex president Momoh's house, this investigating team had only two rooms. One room was filled with bags, clocks etc and the other with personels. These were all obstacles to prevent any body from jumping.

Corporal John Manoh told the court that one Capt. Marah gave Le25000, 000 to implicate Johnny Paul Koroma.

This Capt. Knew within himself that JPK was not involved in any coup plan. He told the court that he saw JPK and greeted him. Johnny Paul's Lawyer Claude Campbell categorically told the court that his client should be acquitted immediately since he was innocent.

From that point on ex president Kabbah influenced the court to still detain Johnny Paul Koroma and a method of adjournment was introduced. It was first, two weeks, a month, and so on just to deny justice. This adjournment was embarked on from October 1996 until 25th May 1997 a period of eight months on a very serious venture to eliminate a political threat. Johnny Paul Koroma was detained at the "Condemn" cell until the day God the Minister of Justice intervened. While he was in detention, he was informed that he was going to be whisked to court on Monday 26th May 1997 to pass a verdict through ex president Kabba's kangaroo court and finally to the firing range and be executed despite the intervention of UNHCR to stay execution.

The most unfortunate development for Ex President Kabba's intentions was dismissed and all detainees at

that time were released on Sunday 25th May 1997.

The following day 26th May 1997, Johnny Paul Koroma got Foday Sankoh's telephone number from a lady. He called Foday Sankoh in Nigeria and he requested him to tell his fighters to come out from the bush and join the peace process. The suggestion was welcomed by Foday Sankoh. It was heightened through the courtesy of the BBC. The message was accepted by "Mosquito" Sam Bockarie.

After the arrest of Foday Sankoh in Nigeria, the RUF saw a bleak future because their leader was already detained in Nigeria through the influence and directive of ex president Kabbah

After the arrest of Foday Sankoh, ex president Kabbah thought of a sinister plan that has been completed. Alas, Ex President Kabbah, desperate to disappoint the nation, selected five people to over throw Foday Sankoh in a "palace coup" in Kailahun. The following were appointed to do the job: Din Jalloh, Faia Musa, and Ambassador Djabbi from the Sierra Leone Navy, former I.G. Siafa and Philip Palmer Spokesman and leader of the team.

Former I.G. Siafa was crafty; he did proceed too far knowing the after effect.

On arrival, the four were immediately arrested and detained. They were court marshaled by Sam Bockarie alias "Mosquito".

When "Super man" knew about Foday Sankoh's detention in Nigeria, Super man wrote a letter to troops at Mile 91. The troops in turn wrote to Army Headquarters' about the RUF request. The Army Headquarters replied asking them if they were prepared to take the risk. The Mile 91 troops accepted to take the risk. They then formed a robust patrol headed by the Commander, a Lieutenant Col. They left for Magburaka by Yonibanana. On arrival, they were welcomed by the RUF.

The meeting was successful because a common understanding was established amongst them. They did not know that it was a brother fighting a brother. With this venture, all hostilities between the army and RUF came to an end. The Army gained tremendous respect. But they were disappointed in ex president Kabbah because they say he was not truthful and sincere in prosecuting the war. The RUF had no regard for him either so in time it was even difficult for ex president Kabbah to even mention the word "Surrender" because there was no truth or confidence. {To be continued}

This story was reproduced verbatim and Stand Firm Newspaper is in no way associated with it.

Gender Based Violence Laws must be reviewed in Sierra Leone

...MenEngage urges Government

BY EDWARD MARAH

The founding Executive Director for MenEngage Sierra Leone Network, a local organization promoting gender laws in the country, Tamba David Mackieu has called on the Government of Sierra Leone to review the Gender Based Violence laws in the country.

He made the call yesterday at his organization's office at 54 Wellington Street in Freetown. Mr. Tamba David Mackieu revealed that MenEngage Sierra Leone Network in collaboration with Sonke Gender Justice Network South Africa, in-country

partners, line ministries, and donor and development partners recently launched a policy scan report through the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs.

He said that the policy scan report represents their organization's views, perception, beliefs and suggestions of what languages our gender related policies should factor in to them to make them easy for women to actively participate in, meaningfully contribute to, and equally benefit from all post conflict reconstruction processes including governance, adding that the policy scan report is intended among other things, to

point out areas/ issues/languages technically shorten or inadequate that has in one way or the other contributed to the vulnerability of women and girls and subsequently abated the possibility of perpetrating violence against them in our society.

He maintained that "We are of the golden opinion that this report will help all key actors including civil society organizations, line ministries, development partners, women groups and women led organizations, among others to understand more that violence against women is not "women alone affair" but a human rights violation and a serious human security issue that require, like other state concerns, priority attention from all of us to address in diverse ways such as policy review, advocacy on women rights issues(example, women's Land rights, technical look at the chieftaincy acts) among lots".

He stressed that the report they believe will go a long way to help them get an insight of several issues such as the role of men and boys in preventing violence against women, role in Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights campaign, prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and parenting which is still widely seen in our country as women role among others.

He pointed out that "One thing I want us all to take note of is the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 which among other things did not stressed the importance of inclusion of women for the sake of equity and effectiveness but rooted in the premise that women's inclu-

sion - their presence, participation and perspectives- will improve the chances of attaining viable and sustaining peace", noting that the protection of women's physical well-being and legal and political rights is not simply an end in itself.

It is not about making conflict safe for women. Rather, it a recognition of the fact that if half of your population is experiencing violence and discrimination, there is no chance of peace, justice or democracy.

He concluded that they are all aware of the fact that women and girls in our country constitute over half of our population. So if these people are experiencing any violence, then we need to ask ourselves the true question, do we really have peace, justice and democracy as indicated above?, We all need to work harder to reach that height as internationally expected.

The Executive Director for National Movement for Emancipation and Progress Ann-Marie Caulker also emphasized the need for the review of Gender Based Violence in the country, adding that her organization is committed to collaborating with other organizations and Government in particular in reviewing the laws.

She commended the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs under Minister Moijue Emmanuel Kaikai for their commitment to the issue of Gender, adding that the Minister has always had open discussions on issues of Gender Base Violence which she said is a clear indication and willingness in reviewing the laws.

Ivory Coast opposition to International Court: Release Gbagbo

Ivory Coast's opposition Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) has demanded the immediate release of former President Laurent Gbagbo from the International Criminal Court (ICC), according to Boubakar Kone, administrator and organizer of the party. The former Ivorian leader has been held in custody at the Hague-based court for nearly two years. The ICC is gathering evidence against Mr. Gbagbo for his role in a civil war that followed his refusal to accept the October 2010 presidential

election. "You cannot investigate your whole life. How much time do they need to investigate? There are other cases to investigate. He's been there almost two years now. [That] should be enough to investigate this case," said Kone. He said it is illegal for the ICC to continue holding Gbagbo.

"In the last two meetings of the party's Central Committee, a resolution [was drafted saying] since the charges against [former] president Gbagbo are insufficient, he should be immediately released. That is an official demand from the party," said Kone. But, critics say Gbagbo should be held accountable for the lives lost during the post-election conflict that arose when he failed to accept electoral defeat. Kone said the country needs the former president to help promote national reconciliation.

"[They were] unable to prove that all the damage [was] due to president Gbagbo. President Gbagbo still feels that he won the election, [but] he was overthrown by a

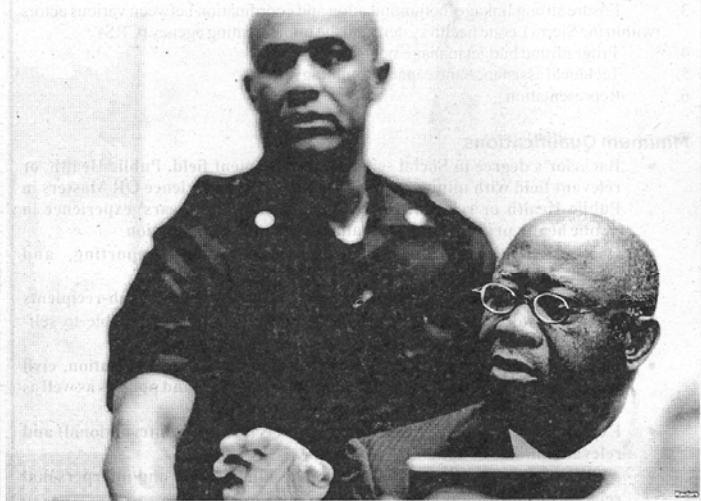
coup d'état; given that, he cannot be [held] responsible for all the damage," said Kone. "Investigations were carried out and the results were that he was not guilty...and the only thing for them to do is to release him. We believe it is as simple as that."

Some analysts say Gbagbo's release from the ICC and his subsequent trip to Ivory Coast could reignite tensions and destabilize the country, which is gradually recovering from the 2010 post-election conflict. Kone disagreed. "All the people of Cote d'Ivoire are demanding that he come to reconcile the people of this country. [It]...is impatient to see president Gbagbo back," said Kone.

"If his absence was something that could bring progress, reconciliation would have already been [done]. Those who are arguing that his return will bring confusion are exactly those who accused him wrongly, and they are afraid."

Human rights groups accused supporters of both Gbagbo and current President Alassane Ouattara of human rights violations during the conflict. Kone said the allegations against Gbagbo as well as the refusal of the ICC to release him in spite of what he says is insufficient evidence shows that the charges are politically motivated.

"The [ICC] is saying that there is no sufficient evidence that he is a criminal so why should he be kept? And that is why our party is demanding that he should be released immediately," continued Kone. "Now if political factors are taken into account, then it is something different and we can negotiate."



The Economist

Tuesday, 12 November 2013

The taxis fall silent

MONROVIA



THE bustling streets of Monrovia, Liberia's capital, are calmer than usual. The sounds of horns and revving engines have been muted since the police banished motorcycles—locally known as “pehn-pehns”—from the city's main thoroughfares. As a result, once-prevalent motorcycle-taxis are now confined to the backstreets, so having made his way through the crowds, Baobab squeezes into an already-packed yellow taxi, now the only motorised means of transport for the Monrovia majority who cannot afford their own cars.

The driver, Morris Kamara, reaches beneath the dashboard to connect two exposed wires, bringing the engine to life. Seven of us are wedged together across the threadbare seats of his 1989 Nissan Sunny. The controversial ban, enacted on November 6th following an act of mob violence by motorcyclists, dominates the conversation as we set off across the city.

“I'm happy. Those young boys are reckless criminals,” says a man half-perched on Baobab's lap. Lots of people agree with him. The city's 40,000 or so motorcycle-taxi drivers form an outcast brotherhood, the lowest echelon of a class-riven society. Many of them previously carried guns at the behest of warlords such as the recently imprisoned former president, Charles Taylor. The unstructured existence of the motorcycle-taxi driver can be appealing and relatively profitable.

“What do you think they are going to do now though?” asks the lady sitting in the prized passenger-seat. The question is one the Liberian government has failed to answer since the end of the civil war a decade

ago. The country's vaunted post-war growth rates have not created jobs for thousands of uneducated and alienated urban young men. The ban removes one of their only legitimate sources of income.

"I don't care about them, but car can't get me to class on time when traffic on," says the teenager to Baobab's left. Absent even the semblance of a public transport system, the motorcycle-taxis were vital. It is now impossible to bypass the city's chronic congestion, bar walking through the stifling humidity, now the only option for many Monroviaans.

The brakes of Mr Kamara's taxi seem to respond best to a repetitive pumping technique. We come to a juddering stop at the Broad Street intersection. Here, police skulk around our taxi, peering through the spider-web of windscreen cracks. "These police are just eating, that's all," complains another passenger.

"Eating the money" is the term Liberians use for corruption. Petty police graft is particularly blatant. This makes it difficult for Liberia to follow Rwanda's lead in regulating motorcycle-taxis effectively. That would require the police to issue tickets for violating rules. Instead, they perform a daily charade of checking licences that are purchased without a test, and vehicle conditions that are not formally regulated. Then they cast a blind eye in exchange for grubby Liberian dollars.

Among Monrovia's taxi drivers, at least, the ban is popular. "Yes, it's good for me!" Mr Kamara laughs. "But good for everyone, too. The streets are safe now." One block on, the car grinds to a halt. Mr Kamara opens the bonnet, revealing an engine seemingly held in place by twisted coat hangers. He pulls the petrol line from the carburettor and sucks on it hard before reconnecting. As he hot-wires his taxi into action once more, Baobab decides to walk instead.

SF Gate

Wednesday, 13 November 2013

Renowned prosecutor says war criminals no longer heroes

By begelko@sfchronicle.com (Bob Egelko)

One of the world's leading prosecutors of war crimes came to San Francisco last week with a surprisingly upbeat message: In a world wracked by violence, international law is making headway.

Not long ago, "in most countries, war criminals (were) war heroes," Richard Goldstone, the former chief prosecutor on United Nations tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, told a Commonwealth Club audience on Wednesday.

"That's changed. ... Impunity has been withdrawn," Goldstone said. "For anybody who values justice, the advances have been nothing short of amazing."

Those advances would be even more amazing, he acknowledged, if the United States would join the International Criminal Court, the UN's chief tribunal for prosecuting genocide and crimes against humanity. Although President Obama has been more cooperative with the court than his predecessor, George W. Bush, Obama has not asked the Senate to ratify U.S. membership or to repeal a law signed by Bush that would authorize a U.S. military invasion if any Americans were brought to the court's headquarters at The Hague to face charges.

"One of the problems with the International Criminal Court," Goldstone said, "is not having the U.S. fully on board."

Goldstone, 75, a highly respected judge in South Africa at the end of the apartheid era, was appointed chief prosecutor of the newly established UN tribunal for Yugoslavia in 1994. Later that year he was also named the lead prosecutor for the court hearing criminal charges over the massacre of ethnic Tutsis by the ruling Hutus in Rwanda.

He knew virtually nothing about international law, Goldstone recalled, but Nelson Mandela, the new president of the post-apartheid nation, "forced me" to accept the UN position on condition that he would return to South Africa's high court afterward. He stayed at the prosecutors' posts until 1996, gained funding and international recognition for the courts, and filed charges against the Bosnian Serb president, Radovan Karadzic, and his top general, Ratko Mladic, for the killings of more than 7,000 Bosnian Muslims in the town of Srebrenica.

Between the post-World War II Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders and the establishment of the Yugoslav tribunal, "there was no such thing as international criminal justice," Goldstone said. "The Rwanda tribunal let the world know about an unprecedented genocide," in which 800,000 Tutsis were slaughtered in 100 days, he said.

And unlike Nuremberg, which was organized by the war's victors, he said, the UN tribunals were established by the international community, with no element of vengeance.

Still, Goldstone conceded, "international criminal justice (is) all about politics." Which is why the United Nations will never refer any of the five permanent Security Council members — the United States,

Russia, Great Britain, France and China — to the ICC for prosecution, he said. It's also the reason that Syria, protected by Russia, will never see its leaders prosecuted for war crimes, Goldstone said, unless a future Syrian government joins the International Criminal Court, which can initiate prosecutions on its own. (Goldstone didn't mention his own run-in with the U.S. government under President Obama, which rejected a report he wrote for the UN in 2009 finding war crimes by both Israel and Hamas in the Israeli government's 2008 military strike on Gaza.)

One question from the audience was why all the International Criminal Court prosecutions have been against African leaders. More nations in Africa than elsewhere have ratified the treaty that created the ICC, Goldstone replied, and several current cases were referred to the court by African countries themselves.

But the court is also investigating alleged atrocities in non-African nations, like Afghanistan and Colombia, Goldstone said. Once cases from elsewhere in the world are brought to trial, he said, "supporters of the court will sleep a lot more restfully."

New Vision (Uganda)

Tuesday, 12 November 2013

Uganda still for international justice, says PMP

Prime minister Amama Mbabazi has said despite weaknesses that have been cited in the International Criminal Court (ICC), Uganda still supports the idea of an international criminal justice system.

He said the system was meant to stop abuse of power in failed states.

Mbabazi was meeting the new French Ambassador-Designate to Uganda, Sophie Makame who paid him a courtesy call at his office last Thursday.

"If those who are entrusted with power have abused or failed to utilize it for the benefit of their people, that [support for a fair international criminal justice system] is still our line," he observed.

The premier said Uganda was among the champions for the creation of an international criminal justice system in 1998 because there were many failed states which needed to be redeemed, hence the Rome Statute.

The Statute established the ICC after being adopted at a diplomatic conference in Rome that year and entered into force in 2002.

But some players have accused the Hague-based ICC of targeting African leaders including Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto.

According to a release from his office, the PM defended the involvement of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) in Somalia, Liberia, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, among others.

"We are not there for territorial ambitions but for stability of the region so that people can have peace," Mbabazi said.

"Many people thought Uganda was a failed state but anyone who has doubts on our ability to maintain stability does not know enough."

On her part, the new French Ambassador-Designate hailed the excellent relations the two countries have maintained since 1986. She said her government would commit up to 80 million Euros (about Sh278bn) to support Uganda's vocationalisation of education programmes.

Makame said France was also willing to contribute to peace in the Great Lakes region, adding that it's the reason she had a presence in other countries including Cameroon.

She replaced Aline Kuster-Menager who was transferred to Benin as ambassador.

The French national received her first ambassadorial appointment in August and her first posting was Uganda. Prior to her new appointment, she was the advisor to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Drum

Tuesday, 12 November 2013

Opinion

Accused of war crimes, Kenya's leaders cry racism

By Ben Winsor

Kenyan president-elect Uhuru Kenyatta greets supporters Photo: Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto are accused of mobilising ethnic militias after a disputed election in 2007. (Reuters: Siegfried Modola)

The cynical manipulation of suffering under colonialism is being used in an attempt to deny justice to thousands of victims of ethnic conflict in Kenya, writes Ben Winsor.

The International Criminal Court is facing its greatest challenge yet, one which will test the fortitude and resolve of the entire international community.

The Court's decision to commence trials against the sitting president and deputy president of Kenya has seen it accused of racism and political targeting, as Kenya last week began petitioning the UN Security Council to defer the cases.

The move is the latest in a series of efforts to derail the proceedings which have seen Kenya deploy not only its entire state apparatus against the Court, but that of the African Union within which it has gained considerable influence.

It's an international controversy that Australia - as a member of both the Security Council and the International Criminal Court - will be called upon to play a leading role.

Ten years ago, the ICC was founded with a mandate to investigate and prosecute genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

It was a statement of resolution - now joined by 122 countries - that the international community has a stake in enforcing the rule of law, that accountability must be pursued, and that impunity for major atrocities must end.

It was a bold step then, and it remains so now, particularly because heads of state are not immune from prosecution.

But the idealistic principles upon which the Court was founded have now collided with hard reality as the institution attempts to try the two most powerful men in one of Africa's most powerful countries.

Allegations of Atrocities

President Uhuru Kenyatta and deputy president William Ruto stand accused of mobilising ethnic militias in Kenya's Rift Valley after disputed election results at the end of 2007.

Over two months, the ensuing violence killed more than 1,000 people. In one incident, 50 men, women and children were burnt alive when a mob set fire to a church in which they sought refuge.

The charges also detail gangs raping women while forcing their husbands to watch, mass forced circumcisions performed with machetes and broken bottles, and the horrific case of a 22-year-old having his penis violently amputated.

More than 600,000 people were displaced by the violence, with many still living in makeshift camps even years later.

While they are now president and deputy president, at the time Kenyatta and Ruto were senior politicians on opposite sides of the conflict.

It was a power-sharing deal brokered by former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan which ended the violence in early 2008, and which delivered both parties to government.

The deal also established a commission of inquiry into the post-election violence which recommended the government establish a tribunal to carry out prosecutions. The government never did.

It was this inaction which prompted the ICC's Prosecutor to pick up the case.
Charges of racist imperialism

Since the ICC commenced proceedings, it has been met with intensifying criticism from Kenya and the African Union.

AU resolutions have repeatedly discouraged member states from cooperating with the Court, even though non-cooperation would violate international law.

While the Court's prosecutor actively examines situations in many countries, all of the Court's cases are in Africa, a fact which has been ruthlessly exploited by those wishing to scuttle the trials.

Head of the AU, Ethiopian prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn, accused the Court of degenerating into 'race hunting'.

President Kenyatta himself branded the Court a "toy of declining imperial powers", and accused it of politicising justice by following the "cues of European and American governments".

The charges have not only been echoed by media in Kenya and across Africa, but have also found traction with some critics in the West.

But despite their serious nature, the accusations of self-serving political interference should be seen for exactly what they are - self-serving political interference.

While it is true that all of the ICC's cases are in Africa, to imply targeting is to ignore reality.

Five of the investigations were opened at the request of the countries themselves, with a further two referred to the Court by the UN Security Council. The Kenyan investigation is in fact the only investigation opened of the prosecutor's own initiative, and even then only after the failure of Kenya's domestic system.

The claims of racism are especially galling considering the prosecutor herself is from Gambia. The Court's bench also includes judges from Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya.

Perhaps more audacious still is the argument repeatedly run by Kenyatta and Ruto that their election as Kenya's leaders is proof of a public pardon.

While the pair may be innocent - as they have always held - claiming clemency through the ballot box is daringly ironic: it is a fundamental tenet of democracy that no one is above the law.

Nowhere could this be more important than in Kenya, a country where political parties often run parallel to ethnic divisions, and where ethnic divisions have all too frequently led to violence paired with impunity.

The politics of interference

Amidst the clamour of controversy that the government and the AU have stoked, Kenya has moved to withdraw from the ICC's founding treaty, and is rumoured to be pressuring other African nations to do the same.

While this will have no effect on the current trials, the unprecedented move would mark a huge step backwards for international accountability, especially as Kenya commands considerable influence on the continent.

At the same time, Kenya is lobbying the Security Council to have the current trials deferred, a move which will call on Australia to cast its decision.

Kofi Annan labelled Kenya's withdrawal an "affront to the victims". Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu went a step further, accusing AU leaders of seeking a "licence to kill, maim and oppress" while they vilify the Court by playing the "race and colonial cards".

Even the United States - not itself a party to the Court - has called on Kenya to reaffirm its commitment to justice and comply with its legal obligations to the ICC.

The cynical manipulation of suffering under racism and colonialism is shameful, that it's being done in an attempt to deny justice to thousands of victims of ethnic conflict makes it all the worse.

From Nuremberg to The Hague, it has been said that international justice soars with the loftiest of ideals while grappling with the very basest of human acts.

Now is not the time to let the ICC down.

Ben Winsor is an Australian Law and International Studies graduate and undertook a six-month placement with the International Criminal Court. All views expressed are his own and do not reflect those of any current or previous employer.

Standard Media (Kenya)

Wednesday, 13 November 2013

Iringo 'furious' over ICC witness coaching claim

By Cyrus Ombati

NAIROBI, KENYA: Interior Principal Secretary Mutea Iringo says he has written to Deputy President William Ruto's legal team at The Hague demanding an apology.

This follows allegations that he and other top officials at the Office of the President coached Witnesses in Ruto's case at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

In the letter Iringo says he told lawyer Karim Khan that the allegations made were false, unfair and without any basis.

Iringo quoted his letter saying: "As a respected and experienced lawyer, I expect that the legal team that you head should avoid playing political games and instead conduct legitimate credible investigations without tarnishing names of innocent individuals."

Iringo was an under secretary in the ministry of internal security in 2008, during which he is accused of coaching the witnesses.

It is then that Ruto's legal team led by Khan said that together with Nancy Gitau and others they fabricated evidence and coached witnesses against the Deputy President.

Iringo told the Standard he is disturbed by Ruto ally and Kericho Senator Charles Keter's demands that he should be sacked or quit over the allegations.

"I have never met the individuals they say were coached by me. I have decided to defend myself because the claims are baseless and I am innocent. I never coached any of those and I have never done that," said Iringo.

He added he wants the truth to be known over the issue.

Keter made the demands at the weekend saying they can not work with individuals who tried to fix Ruto.

His demands followed revelations in the court proceedings at The Hague where Ruto's legal team linked Iringo and other officials to the claims of coaching of witnesses.

Reuters

Tuesday, 12 November 2013

Kenyan cuts in foreign funding of NGOs aimed at silencing critics-HRW



A group of displaced Luo tribe people, aboard a van taking them to a holding centre, point their clubs at Kikuyu tribe members during ethnic clashes in Naivasha, January 29, 2008. REUTERS/Antony Njugun

NAIROBI (Thomson Reuters Foundation) – Kenyan government plans to make large cuts in the foreign funding of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are designed to silence its critics, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Tuesday.

On October 30, the office of the attorney published in the official gazette the Miscellaneous Amendment Bill of 2013, which would slash foreign funding for NGOs in Kenya. Publication is the mandatory first step before a bill is introduced to parliament.

“A public benefit organization shall not receive more than 15 percent of its total funding from external donors,” unless otherwise approved by the finance minister, it said,

The bill also stops donors from funding NGOs directly, forcing them instead to channel funds through a new Public Benefits Organisations Federation

In Ethiopia, many human rights organisations had to close or scale down their activities after similar legislation was introduced in 2009.

“This new law requiring nongovernmental organizations to raise 85 percent of their funding locally may well have the effect of weakening independent voices,” Daniel Bekele, HRW’s Africa director, said in a statement.

PUNISHING CIVIL SOCIETY

HRW linked the proposed legislation to NGO support for the International Criminal Court's (ICC) trial of President Uhuru Kenyatta and Vice President William Ruto on charges of crimes against humanity committed during Kenya's 2007/08 post-election violence.

"The governing Jubilee administration seems to be punishing civil society for its role in the two Kenyan cases at the International Criminal Court," it said.

Kenyatta and Ruto came to power in elections in March 2013 as the Jubilee coalition. During their campaigns, they accused NGOs of relying on funding from sources abroad that they alleged were against Kenya's national interests.

In 2011, returning from an ICC hearing in The Hague, Ruto was quoted as saying "NGOs should stop interfering with government matters, writing letters to their donors abroad to support the ICC intervention and compiling reports about post-election violence. It is none of their business."

In March, the president's director of digital media, Dennis Itumbi, posted a blog on his website calling Britain's Department for International Development, Open Society Foundations, Transparency International, the International Commission of Jurists, Kenya Human Rights Commission and the Africa Centre for Open Governance a "civil society web of evil".

He said the web of NGOs "connected to the ICC cases how they were mooted, financed and witnesses coached".

At the ICC, the prosecution and the defence have accused each other of bribing and intimidating or coaching witnesses. Several prosecution witnesses have taken back their testimony and withdrawn.

BAN MEDIA

The government is also taking steps to restrict media freedom, through one bill passed by parliament and awaiting the president's signature to become law, and a second measure which is at present a proposed bill.

The Information and Communications Amendment Bill passed by parliament last month would create a government-appointed tribunal with powers to revoke journalists' accreditation, seize property and impose hefty fines on the basis of anonymous complaints.

It would also restrict foreign companies' share of the advertising revenue of the Kenyan media to 55 percent. This could force some media companies to close down.

It has not yet been signed into law by the president.

Another proposed bill would give the government power to ban any media content that it deems "prejudicial to public or national interest".

The government was embarrassed by media reports of soldiers looting Nairobi's Westgate Mall in September when they were supposed to be rescuing hostages. Almost 70 people were shot dead by Islamic militants who held the shopping centre for several days.

The head of the police threatened to arrest journalists reporting on the crisis for inciting Kenyans against the authorities.