

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



Aerial view of Aqua Sports Club

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Sierra Leone Hailed As A Leader In Preventing Child Soldier Recruitment

(By Roméo Dallaire and Shelly Whitman, writing in The Globe and Mail)

With French warplanes bombing Timbuktu, the recent announcement by Sierra Leonean President Ernest Koroma that his country would contribute more than 600 troops to the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) went largely unnoticed in the West.

This announcement, however, shows that Sierra Leone truly has turned a corner in its movement toward the consolidation of peace. It's been 11 years since the end of the West African nation's civil war, a bloody conflict that displaced more than 2.5 million people and claimed the lives of 50,000 citizens.

Moreover, an estimated 10,000 children were the victims of military recruitment by all sides to the conflict, comprising more than half of the fighting forces.

The long-term impacts of the use of child soldiers is still being felt in places like Sierra Leone, which continues to struggle with this legacy. It is palpable. You can feel it in the streets. As one young man recounted to us on our drive from Lungi to the ferry crossing into Freetown, "Welcome to Sierra Leone. Security is perfect, for now. Tomorrow one does not know."

Things are improving. Over the past decade, Sierra Leone has demobilized ex-combatants, conducted two free and fair democratic elections, hosted a UN-mandated special court to prosecute those responsible for recruiting child soldiers and conducting mass atrocities, and is now engaged in the first attempt to train all of its security personnel on the prevention of the use of children in armed conflict and their interaction with child soldiers, a project of which my organization is a partner. It is not insignificant that many of Sierra Leone's soldiers are themselves former child soldiers.

Still, it is hard to believe that just over a decade ago Sierra Leone had Nigerian peacekeepers on its soil, attempting to bring an end to the conflict. Sierra Leone's commitment to send troops to Mali underscores the transition it has made from conflict-zone to troop-contributing country to African Union peacekeeping missions, as it also has contributed troops to the UNAMID force in Sudan, another hotspot



A police officer directs traffic in a bustling downtown intersection in Freetown

for the military recruitment of children. It is currently preparing for participation in an AU mission (AMISOM) in Somalia.

This progress is partly due to the professionalization of its military by allied countries, including the U.K. and Canada. Its decision now to train its troops to prevent the use of child soldiers will be critical in conflicts where child soldiers are a significant and, at times, primary weapon of war, such as Mali. Preparing for this interaction must be at the top of the security agenda. Troop-contributing countries from Africa understand this reality far more intimately than their Western counterparts. AU peacekeeping missions and regional partners such as ECOWAS and AFISMA will continue to be major players in conflicts on the continent as the UN and Western Nations continue to scale back their commitments on the continent, a trend which has continued since the early 1990s.

As such, commitments to support training and professionalization of the AU and ECOWAS troops must be a priority for Canada and other Western nations. This preparation includes understanding how to prevent and react to the interaction with child

soldiers.

If Sierra Leone understands the importance of such training and preparation, surely the West can offer support through funding and resources.

Prevention of the use of children as soldiers needs to be recognized as a significant step in preventing and dealing with armed conflict – an early warning indicator that has yet to be taken seriously by those who have the mandate to do so.

As one former child soldier said to us in Freetown: “We are tired of people coming here to take our stories, who then leave and nothing changes. We want to own the change and ensure the future of our country never sees children used in war again.”

The children of Sierra Leone, Mali, Sudan, and Somalia deserve nothing less.

Senator Roméo Dallaire is a retired lieutenant general and former Force Commander of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda. Dr. Shelly Whitman is the executive director of The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative. February 12 is the International Day Against the Use of Child Soldiers.



ICC: "States Must do More to End Use of Child Soldiers"

By Coalition for the International Criminal Court

ICC's first conviction for use of child soldiers a milestone, but states must do more to end war crime, says global Coalition

The Hague/New York—The international prosecution of the war crime of using child soldiers is bringing hope to the most vulnerable in conflict zones worldwide, but states need to do more to stamp out the practice, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court said today on the occasion of the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers.

Under the Rome Statute—the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC)—121 states have to date agreed to investigate and prosecute individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including the recruitment and use as soldiers of children under the age of 15.

In the event that states are unable or unwilling to prosecute such crimes, the ICC acts as a court of last resort. The use of child soldiers has been among the charges in the ICC's first trials.

“The use of children as soldiers is one the most serious crimes that can be committed, robbing children of their innocence by forcing them to commit terrible acts of violence,” said Brigitte Sur, director of regional programs for the Coalition for the ICC, a global network of over 2,500 non-governmental organizations. “While the ICC is increasingly prosecuting this horrific crime and delivering restitution to its victims, more states must carry out prosecutions at the national level or through support for ICC investigations.”

In March 2012, in its first trial and verdict, ICC judges found Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga guilty of enlisting and conscripting children under the age of 15 and using them in hostilities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2002-03. He was later sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment.

"Child soldiers continue to be a major problem of domestic policies of many countries affected by armed conflict, such as Mali, the Central African Republic or the Democratic Republic of Congo," said Bukeni Beck Wazuri, program manager for Africa and the Middle East at WITNESS. "The ICC trial of Thomas Lubanga has certainly provided a glimmer of hope in the fight against impunity for this crime, but primary responsibility lies with national jurisdictions."

A verdict in the ICC trial of Germain Katanga, another Congolese rebel leader charged with using child soldiers—among other crimes—is expected later this year. Similar charges have been lodged against ICC fugitives Bosco Ntanga and Joseph Kony along with his Lords Resistance Army cohorts.

In April last year, the use of child soldiers was among the war crimes for which former Liberian president Charles Taylor was found guilty by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He received a 50-year sentence.

The Lubanga conviction brought the ICC's unique reparations mandate into play for the first time. It is expected that any eventual awards will contribute to the reintegration into society of the former child soldiers involved in the case, 10 of whom testified during the proceedings.

Children reportedly continue to be forced into fighting around the world—in Uganda, Mali, the Central African Republic, Syria and Colombia for example.

“Colombia lags behind in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for conscripting or enlisting children for use in armed conflict,” said Hilda Molano, coordinator of the Coalition against the Involvement of Children and Youth in the Armed Conflict in Colombia (COALICO). “Despite the demobilization of over 5000 children, there have been only two convictions under the Peace and Justice law, and 13 in ordinary courts, with none of these addressing sexual violence,” Molano added. “We call on the government to increase the prosecution of those responsible for this atrocious crime.”

“In northern Mali, armed groups have used child soldiers to maintain and expand their control over territory,” said Solidarité Internationale pour UN Développement Endogène (SIDE), a member of the Malian Coalition for the ICC. “We urge an end to the recruitment of child soldiers and denounce the perpetrators of this crime, a violation of children’s rights.”

On this **International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers**, governments around the world must pledge to take concrete steps to prevent this war crime and ensure children that are used as soldiers have access to justice, rehabilitation and reparation.

Background: The International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers marks the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict on **12 February** 2002. More than 140 states have ratified the Protocol, agreeing to assume responsibility for the prohibition of the recruitment of children under 18 into armed groups and government forces and their direct participation in hostilities.

On 3 October 2012, Thomas Lubanga appealed his guilty verdict and sentence. The ICC prosecutor appealed for the sentence to be revised upwards. A decision is pending.

The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Central to the Court's mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. There are currently eight investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Cote d’Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; Libya; and Mali. The ICC has publicly issued 22 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. The Court issued a judgment in its first trial on 14 March 2012. Two other trials are ongoing. The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has also made public that it is conducting seven preliminary examinations on four continents: Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea and Nigeria.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.
coalitionfortheicc.org

Experts from DRC human rights organizations and international NGOs are available for background information and comment. List of experts available upon request to:

The Standard (Kenya)

Thursday, 14 February 2013

ICC chief cites new challenges ahead of status hearing

By FELIX OLICK

Nairobi, Kenya: International Criminal Court holds status hearing on two Kenya cases today against backdrop of admission by its top executive that the trials face serious challenges.

Two of the suspects – Jubilee presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta and his running mate William Ruto – chose not to appear at The Hague, but will be part of the trial process via video link from an undisclosed location.

ICC President Sang-Hyun Song admitted the court was facing logistical challenges in prosecuting two cases against four Kenyans charged with crimes against humanity.

Mr Song spoke out about the challenges ahead of today's session aimed at laying ground rules for the trials scheduled to begin on April 10 and 11.

Song cited the imminent elections – for which two of the accused are running on a joint ticket for the president – and logistics as a cause for worry as the trial date beckons.

The South Korean judge said that the trials are meant to start in April but, “since there are so many variables here, we don't know what's going to happen”.

“At the moment, I must admit that the logistics aspect of the Kenya case, for example, is not necessarily easy,” he said.

Song, who is also an ICC appeal judge, added: “These four suspects are under summonses to appear. They are not arrested people. They keep on saying they would comply with the ICC procedures and so on and so forth. How will they come all the way to The Hague to attend trials and for how long?”

Stick to schedule

Former Head of Civil Service Francis Muthaura and Uhuru are charged in the first case, while Ruto and Kass FM presenter Joshua arap Sang are in the second case.

The ICC president, however, said they would continue to conduct judicial work in the country, as was originally scheduled regardless of what happens in Kenya politically. “We will continue to conduct our judicial work on the Kenya cases as was originally scheduled regardless of what's going to happen in Kenya politically or otherwise,” Justice Song said in a speech at Columbia University, New York, on Tuesday.

Meanwhile Uhuru and Ruto will today follow proceedings from an undisclosed location via video link. Mr Sang and Mr Muthaura travelled to The Hague for the Status Conference, which begins Thursday.

Among the agenda of the meeting involving Trial Chamber V judges, defence, and prosecution teams are a request by Uhuru and Ruto to have the trials scheduled to start on April 10 and 11 postponed.

Parties will discuss whether the delays by the prosecution in disclosing witnesses to be relied on at trial, evidence and witness statements will affect the trial date.

Defence teams have protested that the prosecution has not given them enough time to study the swathes of evidence and are apprehensive that could affect preparation for the trial.

The third item listed on the agenda is the practical modalities of the accused's attendance of trials. It is the first time the court is trying accused persons who are not in custody at The Hague.

Trial Chamber V Judges led by Presiding Judge Kuniko Ozaki issued the three-point agenda on Monday.

Uhuru and Muthaura appear at 9:30 The Netherlands time, while Ruto and Sang appear at 14.30.

Ruto and Sang also want their visa conditions, which restrict their movement in The Hague reviewed. They want the restriction extended to 60km from the stipulated 30km radius, citing the expected lengthy trials.

“Mr Sang, through Trial Chamber, would like the Registry to liaise with the host State to modify his usual visa conditions, which restrict his movements within The Netherlands to The Hague. The defence submits that when the trial begins, and Mr Sang is expected to remain in the country for an extended period of time, this restriction would be unduly burdensome,” Sang's lawyer Katwa Kigen argued in an application.

Sang has also complained to the judges that his legal aid has been reduced and could undermine his trial rights.

Wants case postponed

In his observations on Agenda items for the Status Conference on Wednesday last week, Ruto requested for the postponement of his trial to give his defence more time to prepare.

Ruto argued that due to late disclosure of prosecution materials by ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, his defence team faces a challenge in putting up a watertight defence on April 10.

“It is submitted that such extensive late disclosure, which is still continuing, was anticipated by neither the defence team nor the Chamber. In those circumstances, the defence invites the Chamber to consider providing it with more time to prepare its case,” his lawyer David Hooper said in an application on Wednesday.

Uhuru had also asked the Chamber to review his trial date arguing that his case should be referred back to the Pre-Trial Chamber for review after the prosecution dropped evidence of a key witness.

His lawyers submitted the prosecution had dropped witness “number four” whose testimony was critical in securing confirmation of charges against the Deputy Prime Minister.

Muthaura has also argued the case against him had been built around the testimony of witness “number four”.

Judge Song has directed the Trial Judges to seek observation from participants on whether it is possible to have the trials moved from The Hague to either Kenya or Arusha, Tanzania.

Standard Digital

Thursday, 14 February 2013

Uhuru rated high on ICC and security issues

By MOSES NJAGIH

Jubilee Alliance presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta impressed on his proposals on security and his responses on the case he is facing at the International Criminal Court.

Asked which candidate addressed issues of security and crime best, Uhuru led with 22 per cent.

Uhuru also topped on the ICC issue with a 25 per cent rating, with his closest opponent, Prime Minister Raila Odinga at 17 per cent.

Overall, Uhuru was rated the best debater at 37 per cent followed by Raila at 23 per cent. On tribalism, Uhuru was joint second performer with his CORD opponent Raila scoring 22 per cent, floored by Peter Kenneth at 23 per cent.

Uhuru was also second ranked on education, winning the approval of 16 per cent behind Restore and Build Kenya's James Ole Kiyiapi, who had 18 per cent.

On health, Uhuru also held the runners-up position at 17 per cent with Narc Kenya's Martha Karua topping with 27 per cent.

He also held the same position on party politics where he lost to Raila with 24 per cent against the latter's 25 per cent. Uhuru emerged the greatest beneficiary among the undecided voters who followed the presidential debate.

According to the Ipsos Synovate opinion poll on the debate, Uhuru won the heart of the majority voters who had not made up their minds before the contest.