

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



**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

**as at:**

Monday, 14 January 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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Life Herald  
Monday, 14 January 2008

# CHARLES TAYLOR MAY GO SCOT FREE?

## *Agency Report*

*Head of Defence Counsel, Courney Griffiths for ex-president of Liberia Charles G. Taylor standing trial at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands has intimated the court that his client would not be found guilty of the crimes for which he was indicted.*

Speaking to the court, lawyer Griffiths described the testimonies of the witnesses so far as being "the overall picture of events during the crisis in Sierra Leone." He pointed out that, the testimonies of the witnesses so far are "not relevant" to the charges against his client, adding that, there is no indication in the witnesses' testimonies that his client committed or could be held responsible for the alleged atrocities. The Defence Counsel maintained that what seemed to be



Charles Taylor

happening during the period under review was that the Sierra Leone government was "fighting a proxy war" using Liberian fighters that were opposed to Charles Taylor.

The Defence team also questioned a witness, Pastor Isaac Tamba Teye until the latter "lost his temper" and had to be reminded that the Chief Prosecutor Steven Rapp had earlier

warned him not to be angry but to simply answer directly the questions posed to him. Chief Prosecutor Steven Rapp was later quoted as saying that Defence lawyers sometimes posed questions to witnesses that were either "embarrassing" or "insulting" to the witnesses. He added that he had had experience of

*See Page 2*

# Taylor Trial

this during the trial in Rwanda of alleged perpetrators of genocide.

Charles Taylor who maintains that he is not guilty of the crimes for which he was indicted, was composed during the trials and seen taking notes of the proceedings.

Earlier, a witness, Pastor Alex Tamba Taye exposed a number of atrocities that he claimed to have witnessed during the civil strife in Sierra Leone.

Shortly after his testimony, Prosecution lawyers told the court that they envisage a tough time ahead for the ex-president of Liberia Charles Taylor. According to the Prosecution, they have dozens of witnesses ready to prove that Charles Taylor was 'responsible' for the war in Sierra Leone and the atrocities perpetrated on innocent civilians. Prosecution lawyers at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands led Pastor Tieh in evidence last week.

According to the witness, he was captured together with a large group of women and men sometime in 1998 in the eastern part of Sierra Leone. He maintained that his captors separated the women from the men and proceeded to gun down most of the men, adding that he was spared when he professed to join the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which was waging war in the country at the time.

Pastor Taye further told the court that he was brought before Sam Bockarie alias *Maskita* who was the commander of the group that captured the witness. (*Maskita* however, was declared killed some years ago and his body flown to Sierra Leone from Liberia where he was reportedly involved in an ambush).

Pastor Taye went on to say that whilst he was in captivity, he saw a helicopter with Liberia markings land in a clearing. He added that he also saw arms and ammunition being off-loaded from the helicopter. He maintained that when Commander Sam Bockarie asked him what position he wanted in the RUF; according to Pastor Tieh, he told Sam Bockarie that he wanted to be Field Marshal.

However, the witness said he was laughed at for showing interest in such a high position, adding that, he was then told by Sam *Maskita* Bockarie that not even he (Sam Bockarie) was a 'one star General' and neither was his (Sam Bockarie's) boss Charles Taylor a five-star General, let alone Field Marshal. The witness told the court that it was the first time Commander Sam Bockarie made direct mention of his link to Charles Taylor.

In another development, Pastor Taye described to the court how a number of boys recruited into the Small Boys Unit (SBU) of the RUF, killed another small boy after chopping off the boy's feet and both hands with a machete and then throwing the boy's limbless, bleeding and almost lifeless body into a pit latrine. He added that the boys of the SBU did not show any mercy even when the captured boy was screaming and begging them to release him.

Charles Taylor, former president of Liberia is facing several count charges for War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity perpetrated on innocent men, women and children during the decade year old war in Sierra Leone. Some of the charges include rape, recruiting child soldiers, sexual slavery and other serious crimes. He is being tried at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands. The trial continues.

## We Yone

Monday, 14 January 2008

### Taylor's Trial

The trial of Charles Ghankay Taylor which began on Monday January 7, at The Hague should send a powerful message to abusive political leaders in Africa and an important signal that impunity will not be allowed to stand and that the rule of law must prevail.

Although political and legal obstacles to the prosecution of government leaders for serious human rights abuses remain a strong force to contend with because governments are often constrained to take up cases outside their borders as was the case of the Sierra Leone government and Charles Taylor. It is crystal clear that most heads of state accused of serious human rights abuses use the traditional immunity from prosecution for acts committed in office. In some instances, the differences between national and international legal system and the absence of competent institutions can expose the irritating questions of jurisdiction and procedure.

of jurisdiction and procedure. Africa's stance to hold senior government officials and rebel leaders accountable for torture, murder, rape and other serious crimes against humanity is a step in the right direction. The trial of Charles Taylor who faces charges ranging from terrorism, rape and to mutilation and the use of child soldiers is the first time a former African head of state had been arrested and charged with human rights abuses committed while in office.

What African leaders should bear in mind is that justice belongs not to this class or that class, nor to a particular relationship between classes but to society functioning as a whole. Justice evolves through the progress of society and has its foundation on natural law of equal treatment. It is also important for justice to be seen and done to all officials of the most powerful countries who

necessarily remain exempt from prosecution if international justice will become a more level playing field.

The key to fair treatment under the law and ending impunity is to work towards having each African state fully exercise its responsibility to ensure the rule of law is upheld. The efforts to end the cycle of violence by ensuring accountability for past crimes, states should work closely with affected populations and governments as possible if the foundation of democracy is to be sustained. Some African leaders may be prepared to accept the risk of injustice to others believing themselves to be immune from the risk of suffering injustice at the hands of their governments. Perhaps they might reflect on Pastor Niemoller's lament in Hitler's Germany:

*"... They came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came up for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up."*

The African people deserve to be ruled by leaders who respect the rule of law. The courts and their processes are the only sure protection of individuals-and ultimately the only sure protection of a community- against illegal injustice. It would be naïve to think that could be any adequate approach to international justice without constant awareness of the present state of knowledge concerning justice in the domestic context. Whatever happens, the days of injustice and impunity are numbered in Africa

[Not: We Yone is the government's official newspaper]

We Yone

Monday, 14 January 2008

# Hinga Norman family grateful to President Ernest Koroma



Some supporters of Chief Hinga Norman, the late Coordinator of the Civil Defence Force (CDF), have said that if President

Ernest Bai Koroma was in power, Norman would have had a better treatment from the All People's Congress (APC) government during his run-in with the Special Court of Sierra Leone.

On behalf of the greater CDF families, I wish to categorically state that the Hinga Norman family and the families of Mr. Moinina Fofana and Dr. Alieu Kondewa both presently incarcerated, are collectively grateful for the kindness shown to them since the death of Chief Norman by the present government. The Hinga Norman family also acknowledges with gratitude the kindness extended to the late Chief by Mr. Victor Foh and then APC leader, Ernest Bai Koroma, through personal visits and telephone calls to Mr. Norman at the Detention Center. The Kamajors and the CDF families are also very grateful for various donations in cash and kind offered to them by President Koroma and Mr. Foh in the past several months.

With respect to the alleged forceful eviction of Mrs. Mamie Norman, it is to be remembered that the house at No. 13 Spur Road, is a ministerial residence and government both SLPP and the present APC have been gracious enough to allow Mrs. Norman to live there without let or hindrance for the past five years even though Chief Norman was no longer a minister or deputy minister of State. It is also to be noted that

The supporters said that the Norman family is grateful to President Ernest Koroma for many acts of goodwill he has extended to the family since he came to power. The supporters were responding to a public release by the Rev. Alfred Sam Foray, long-time defender of Chief Norman, who today refuted an article in the DEMOCRAT newspaper that the APC government had thrown the Norman family out of the ministerial quarters they had been occupying.

Here is the release from Sam Foray:

## RESPONSE TO DEMOCRAT NEWSPAPER

To the Editor:

Please permit me space in your journal to respond to a recent report by the *Democrat* Newspaper regarding the eviction of the family of Late Sam Hinga Norman from the residence at No. 13 Spur Road, Freetown. In its report, the paper also alleges that Mr. Victor Foh, Secretary General of the All People's Congress (APC), carried with him thugs who removed roofing from the residence in question prior to forcefully removing Mrs. Norman from the house.

government through Mr. Victor Foh gave Mrs. Norman several weeks of notice to vacate and that adequate considerations were given to Mrs. Norman to find alternate living accommodations.

*I was told that I have to leave the quarters and I was aware that this was not my private family quarters, so I left,* says Mrs. Norman. *I have made no statement of complaint about my treatment at the hands of Mr. Foh to any newspaper,* she says. Mrs. Norman also suggested that those who reported that she had been maltreated and roofs removed from the house by thugs directed by Mr. Foh to enforce her eviction should be asked to explain where they got that report from. But it was not from her. Presently, Mrs. Norman and her children are quietly residing at a private residence as the Norman family prepares to celebrate the one year anniversary of the death of Chief Norman in April.

On behalf of the Hinga Norman family at home and abroad, I thank you for your audience.

Rev. Alfred Sam Foray,

# Awareness Times

Monday, 14 January 2008

## The Normans Defend Ernest's Gov't

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On behalf of the Hinga Norman family at home and abroad, I thank you for your audience.

**Rev. Alfred SamForay,  
For the Hinga Norman Family**

Awareness Times  
Monday, 14 January 2008

## Special Court Resumes RUF Trials

*By Lamin Alhaji Turay*

The trials involving members of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) on Monday resumed with a witness who was member of that organization, who claimed he was 19 years old when captured.

Speaking in an open manner, the witness told the court that he did not escape from the RUF to go to government forces during the war because he feared that if he did he would have been caught and killed.

He further said a number of commanders who held senior positions in the jungle gave regular information on the behaviour and comportment to the leader the now deceased Foday Sankoh.

The witness recalled the name of one Mohamed Tarawallie who was close to the late Mr. Sankoh.

He explained that the period 1994 - 1996 was called the jungle period as this was the time when they launched a series of attacks on towns and villages regardless of civilian casualty.

The witness however said it was also the time when they attacked government troops to get ammunition and medicine.

When asked whether they had rules and regulations governing them he responded in the affirmative.

He highlighted some of the rules, which he said included not killing innocent people, raping and purloining civilian property.

He added that there were special people among them who were called the Black Guys who reported such manners to the leaders.

According to prosecution witness T.F.2, who continued to testify in the trial for the Issa Sesay defence, there was no unity between the R.U.F and the AFRC after the retreat from Freetown to Koidu in Kono district.

The witness told the court that when the retreated to Kono, Superman, a senior commander of the RUF was in control of the base.

He further stated that the AFRC did not want to obey the order of RUF, which made a good number of them to move over to Kurubolah, Neya chiefdom in the Koinadugu district, where the late S.A.J. Musa was at the time residing.

The witness lamented that they RUF members who were loyal to the ideology of the RUF remained behind.

He concluded that the AFRC also departed base in Koidu Town, Kono District after Sam Mosquito Bockarie of the RUF ordered the arrest of all AFRC members who had looted the bank in the township.



Awareness Times  
Monday, 14 January 2008

### **Death Penalty for Treason Cases to be Abolished**

Local newspaper reports state that the Chairman of the Constitutional Review Commission, Dr. Peter L Tucker has disclosed that his Commission has proposed the abolishment of the death penalty for treasonable offences while those found guilty of murder should face the full penalty of the law. Dr. Peter Tucker intimated that the death penalty should be abolished in all cases of treason or other crimes of a political nature which do not directly cause the death of another person, and should be replaced by life imprisonment.

Concord Times  
Monday, 14 January 2008

# IG ordered to enlist ex-combatants

*By Rachel Horner*

State House Thursday ordered the Inspector General of Police to hurriedly recruit some 14 ex-combatants into the police force for onward training as personal bodyguards to the President.

Brima Acha Kamara has denied ever receiving any order from the President to enlist ex-combatants into the force but retorted that: "There is nothing wrong in enlisting ex-combatants. Are they not Sierra Leoneans?"

The police boss has already sworn the ex-combatants, most of them are without professional police training, as members of the Operation Service Division (OSD) on the day the letter was issued him.

The 14 ex-combatants - among them Idrissa Karmara aka Leather

Boot, Ibrahim Sesay, Osman Bagura, Sorie Mansaray, Idrissa Ibrahim Sesay and Alimamy Mansaray, are ex-soldiers who later joined forces with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) - plus 6 general duty police officers are expected to leave the country today for a two-month training course in Morocco.

Dated Thursday January 10, 2008 the letter was conveyed to the police from the office of the President with the signature of Brigadier Kellie Conteh, head of the Office of National Security.

Meanwhile, director of police media, Inspector Ibrahim Samura has confirmed that the police have directives from State House but noted that the

recruits were non-SLP nominees.

"According to the rules, one should be a police officer before one serves as a close protection officer. One cannot be a close protection officer without going through the rudiments and ethics of professional policing," he said.

"We have absorbed them but they cannot act as protection officers until they undergo various trainings funded by the government," Samura added.

These said enlistments seemed to have caused some problems within the rank and file of the police force. A police officer, who preferred anonymity, asked whether the president has lost confidence in the force.

A trader, Mohamed Thoronka said indeed the police are not trustworthy. "For instance, imagine Inspector General of Police, Brima Acha Kamara could change immediately after the elections," he jeered.

Another Freetown resident Sally Boima said the action by the president was wrong.

The Exclusive

Monday, 14 January 2008

# DISASTER

## Leather Boot, 13 Others For Presidential Guard

His Excellency the President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma last Thursday nominated former SLA officer Idriss Kamara aka Leather Boot and thirteen ex-combatants for recruitment into the Operations Support Division (OSD) of the Sierra Leone Police Force to serve as his close bodyguards.

They include retired Captain Idrissa Kamara (Leather Boot), Sorieba Mansaray, Idrissa Ibrahim Sesay, Kabba M.S.

Dumbuya, Ernest M. Ngegba Sullay Deen Sesay, Josephy Dumbuya, Victor V. Koroma, Ibrahim Sesay, Osman Kamara, Osman Bangura, Alex Bangura, Alimamy Mansaray and Cecil Hadji.

They have all served in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) in the nineties and later joined forces with the Revolutionary United Front.

After the training which

they are expected to undergo in Morocco, they will form part of the President's squad of bodyguards working directly under the supervision of the Assistant Inspector General of Police David Sesay.

The appointment of the fourteen has been confirmed by the Inspector General of Police Brima Acha Kamara who told The Exclusive that they will be leaving shortly for Morocco for advanced training.

It could be recalled that in the late 1990's Leather Boot and others broke away from the national army and joined forces with the former RUF to cause several havoc on innocent people in the country.

Leather boot and his colleagues last Friday pledged to the Inspector General, their commitment and preparedness to provide the security necessary to the President and all government functionaries.

## Cotton Tree News

Friday, 11 January 2008

### **Charles Taylor trial continues**

Written by Francis Sowa

The trial of Charles Taylor continued at the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague. The Prosecution continued the examination of Liberian witness Varmuyan Sheriff. Mr. Sheriff told the court about various routes used by Charles Taylor to supply weapons to the RUF. He showed three routes used for weapon shipments from Monrovia to Lofa County on the border with Sierra Leone. Mr Sheriff said Taylor's army divisions had big trucks which were given to him by Taiwan. He told the court that the trucks followed the main route.

He said the RUF crossed from Sierra Leone to Bomaru, to Vahun through the United Logging Company. The Prosecution witness said the Sierra Leonean rebels had a right to go all over Liberia's Lofa County. Mr Sheriff said Mr. Taylor instructed his army commanders to use civilians to carry ammunition. He said civilians were forced to carry heavy loads through deep forest for up to two days. Liberian civil society groups have sent representatives to witness the proceedings in the court. The trial continues.

Meanwhile, the RUF trial resumed with a witness who was member of the RUF. He said he was nineteen years when he was captured. Speaking in an open manner, he told the court that he did not escape from the RUF to go to the government troops because he feared that if he was caught he would be killed. He said a series of commanders who held important positions in the jungle gave reports to the RUF Leader, the late Foday Sankoh. Among them he mentioned one Commander Mohamed Tarawalie who he said was close to the late Mr.Sankoh.

The witness said 1994 to 1996 was called the jungle period. He said this was the time when they launched a series of attacks in towns without protecting the civilian population. The witness said it was also the time when they attacked government troops to get ammunition and medicine. When asked whether they had rules governing them in the jungle he said yes.

Naming some of them he said they were not supposed to kill innocent people, not to rape and take civilian's property. He said there were special people amongst them who were called the black guards who reported the occurrence of such matters to their leaders.

## The Times (South Africa)

Monday, 14 January 2008

### The invisible trial of the Lord of War

ROWAN PHILP: The Hague

Charles Taylor faces war-crimes charges in an empty court

THERE are no mobs at the trial of the Lord of War, no victims raising their amputated limbs in anger and no gasps from the gallery as witnesses describe scenes of utter depravity.

Instead the war crimes trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor — billed as the event to finally strike fear into the hearts of Africa’s strongmen presidents — takes place in a quiet, sterile, glass-encased courtroom .

Among the few witnesses to the trial of a man held responsible for 250 000 deaths, as well as hundreds of thousands of rapes and mutilations, are two dozen school children on a field trip from south Florida.

Seated in the dock, the 59- year-old “super-warlord” does not have the hounded look of Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic, fellow heads of state recently tried for similarly grotesque crimes against humanity.

Taylor — brazenly sporting solid gold cuff links, ring and watch — calmly jots messages in red ink on green post-it notes for his legal team, while chewing peppermint gum.

At one point, he blows a kiss to his daughter through the bullet-proof glass partition, as she chuckles about how much weight he’s lost in jail.

In the sterile environs of the International Criminal Court in the Netherlands, it’s easy to forget that Taylor is the man who is accused of murdering at least two close friends in 2003, and ordering whole villages razed, just in case one among them would one day be called to testify against him.

Held in The Hague — for fear that it would trigger mass unrest in Sierra Leone — the Special Court for Sierra Leone is a world away from the crumbling walls, poverty and limbless masses of post-war Freetown.

But it is here, this week, that prosecutors set out a stunning claim that, if successfully proven, will rewrite west- African history: that Sierra Leone did not, in fact, have a civil war, but, instead, was the victim of the biggest, bloodiest robbery of all time — instigated by a single man: Taylor.

Chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp tells the court that Taylor’s plan — formed while being trained by Muammar Gaddafi in 1986 — “was to take over political and physical control of Sierra Leone in order to exploit its abundant natural resources”. Taylor is said to have looted an estimated R3-billion as a result of the conflict in Sierra Leone.

The court hears that Taylor, who has never set foot in Sierra Leone, carried out his brazen plan by directing rebel forces in the neighbouring country, and controlling the civilian population through the sexual enslavement of women and butchering of people.

A Baptist lay preacher, Taylor is reportedly being held in the same prison cell where Milosevic stayed — and died — during his war crimes trial in 2006.

However, unlike the circus that surrounded Milosevic, Taylor's trial could easily be overlooked.

"I am amazed that no one in Holland seems to be talking about this; that there are even so few African faces here to see this," says Anna-Maria Carrera, a student from Ecuador studying in The Hague. "It's dramatic being here. I mean: did you see Taylor wearing all of that gold in court, when he is accused of stealing it? It's like he wants to shock the world ... but the world isn't noticing."

Barward Johnson, one of just four civil society activists from Sierra Leone and Liberia attending the trial, said victims' families were too poor and too weary to make the trip.

Added Johnson: "Even for me, and despite all the allegations, it is humiliating to see my former president on trial like this."

Johnson said other than a billboard in Liberia's capital, Monrovia, reading "Charles Taylor is Innocent", being defaced three times recently, public interest in the country was "only moderate".

Meanwhile, over the border, only a small group gathers in Freetown's court buildings each day to watch a live feed of the proceedings.

Taylor initially escaped arrest and prosecution in 2003 when three fellow African leaders, including President Thabo Mbeki, intervened to shield him from international warrants.

But now Taylor is facing 11 counts of crimes against humanity, war crimes and the recruitment of child soldiers.

This week prosecutors kicked off the anticipated eight month- trial with an account by Alex Temba Teh, 47, the sole survivor of a 1998 massacre .

After describing how 101 fellow villagers were machine- gunned to death — and then had their heads chopped off by children as young as 10 from "Small Boy Units" — the softly spoken reverend told of the pitiless murder of a child: "I saw some other [boy soldiers] coming closer to me with another small boy, and the boy was crying; screaming. At first they put his right arm on a log and amputated it at the wrist with a machete. The boy was screaming and shouting and asking: 'What have I done?'

"They took the left arm ... and sliced it off. They took the left leg and put it on the same log and sliced it off at the ankle. At last they took the right leg and cut it off. They threw him into a toilet pit."

A video was also played, showing a woman who had been sexually assaulted with a stick by rebels; men enslaved on captured diamond fields and a miner who had his arms cut off before having to watch his family burnt to death.

Introducing the video, prosecutor Mohamed Bangura said: " If we are distressed watching and hearing an account of an amputation; of a sexual assault... we can image the terror of the people at the time."

## Associated Press

Friday, 11 January 2008

### Taylor Attorney Calls Witness Unstable

By MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Charles Taylor's defense attorney argued Friday that a key prosecution witness at the former Liberian president's war crimes trial was mentally unstable.

Testimony from Varmuyan Sherif earlier this week linked the Liberian ex-president closely to rebels accused of atrocities in Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war.

British defense attorney Courtenay Griffiths suggested Sherif, one of Taylor's former body guards, was in mental anguish all the time he worked for Taylor because he knew Taylor's forces had killed members of his family in Liberia. Those killings are beyond the scope of the current trial.

"Given what happened to my family, what am I doing working for this monster?" That was permanently in your mind, wasn't it?" Griffiths said, to which Sherif replied, "No."

"What I was putting to you quite bluntly is that you were crazy," Griffiths said.

"I was never crazy," Sherif replied.

Sherif, 39, testified that Taylor smuggled arms, cash and communications equipment to the Revolutionary United Front or RUF — one of the most notoriously brutal militias in the Sierra Leone war.

Prosecutors at the Special Court for Sierra Leone have filed 11 charges against Taylor, including murder, rape and terrorizing civilians, saying he supported and armed the RUF and other rebels.

Taylor, the first former African head of state tried at an international tribunal, has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Among Sherif's claims are that Taylor smuggled weapons and ammunition in rice sacks before handing them to rebels and that he gave U.S. dollars and a satellite phone to RUF leader Sam Bockarie.

Sherif was the first of nearly 60 witnesses from Taylor's inner circle whom the prosecution plans to call to support allegations that Taylor orchestrated atrocities in Sierra Leone from the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

Sherif said Taylor's influence with the RUF was so strong that he later had Bockarie replaced as the militia's leader.

"Mr. Taylor was the father of the RUF," Sherif said Thursday. The RUF was notorious for terrorizing civilians by chopping off limbs and decapitating the corpses of its enemies.

Griffiths argued with Sherif over his claim that he was Taylor's confidante, and suggested his job was little more than to ensure Taylor's motorcade had fuel and full tires.

"I suggest you were never as close to President Taylor as you claim to be," Griffiths said. "You say you were part of the inner circle, an insider, when you were not."

Taylor's trial resumed this week after a six-month interruption. It was adjourned in June after the opening session when Taylor boycotted the proceedings and fired his lawyer.

Earlier this week, a Sierra Leonean clergyman and teacher described in harrowing detail the massacre and decapitation of 101 men and the dismemberment of a child soldier. An international diamond expert also testified that diamonds mined by Sierra Leone militias and their forced laborers funded the conflict.



## Agence France-Presse

Thursday, 10 January 2008

### **Lawyers at Taylor trial aim to discredit witness**

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Lawyers for Charles Taylor sought Thursday to discredit a witness who told the court of the Liberian president's ties with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone, contending that he was biased against Taylor.

Defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths stressed that the witness, Varmuyan Sherif, who worked for Taylor's Special Security Service, was once one of Taylor's sworn enemies who fought in a rival militia.

Taylor -- the first former African head of state to face a warcrimes trial -- is accused of arming, training and controlling the Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone in exchange for diamonds.

The prosecution is relying on so-called "insider witnesses" to establish a link between Taylor and the rebels who committed atrocities on the ground in Sierra Leone.

Sherif, a Liberian in charge of Taylor's motorcade security, told the court how RUF leaders often came to Monrovia and received instructions, money and weapons from Taylor and his alleged right-hand man Benjamin Yeaten.

In his cross-examination, Griffiths highlighted the unusual career of the witness -- before becoming the deputy director of Taylor's security services, Sherif was a commander of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) fighting against Taylor's National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL).

"Yes, by that time I hated Mister Taylor," Sherif said, telling the court that repeated NPFL attacks drove him to flee and led to him eventually ending up in a refugee camp in Sierra Leone.

"I had my back against the wall," he said, and so joined the Liberian United Democratic Front, the predecessor of ULIMO.

Pressed by Taylor's lawyer, Sherif said that the Sierra Leonean government "supplied trucks, artillery, RPG's (anti-tank weapons) arms and ammunition".

Made a battalion commander after the ULIMO entered Liberia from its bases in Sierra Leone, Sherif refused to speak of an invasion by his rebels.

"It was not an invasion we wanted to go back to Liberia," he said.

After the Abuja peace agreement in 1996, a new government was formed incorporating all the former warring militias. Sherif, being one of the senior ULIMO commanders, got a high-ranking post in the security services. After Taylor won the elections in 1997, he personally asked Sherif to stay on.

Taylor is the first former African head of state to appear before an international tribunal. He faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity including terrorising the civilian population, murder, rape and the use of child soldiers. The former president has pleaded not guilty.

According to the prosecution of the Special Court for Sierra Leone Taylor controlled RUF rebel forces in neighbouring Sierra Leone who went on a blood diamond-funded rampage of killing, mutilation and rape during the 1991-2001 civil war.

Around 120,000 people were killed in the conflict, with rebels mutilating thousands more, cutting off arms, legs, ears or noses.

Newsweek  
Thursday, 10 January 2008



R. Utrecht / AFP-Getty Images (left); M. Kooren / AFP-Getty Images

## **Trials Without Borders**

Stephen Rapp, the U.N. lawyer prosecuting Charles Taylor, talks about his case against the Liberian ex-president and the power of international courts to stop slaughter

By Barrett Sheridan

**NEWSWEEK WEB EXCLUSIVE**

Updated: 9:02 PM ET Jan 10, 2008

War criminals and human-rights violators often receive a different sort of justice than the rest of us. An exiled dictator can more reasonably expect to spend his final days in a Parisian chateau than a squalid cell. Stephen Rapp wants to change those expectations. As a U.N. prosecutor, first in Rwanda and now for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, he holds criminals accountable for their actions--even when they operate at the highest levels of power. His case against Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president accused of fomenting slaughter in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s, opened Jan. 7 with a diamond expert who testified that Taylor financed massacres from sales of the precious gems. Before the trial began, Rapp spoke by phone with NEWSWEEK's Barrett Sheridan from the airport in the Freetown. Excerpts:

### **NEWSWEEK: What are the charges against Taylor?**

**Stephen Rapp:** Taylor was in effective control of the Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone at the time that they were committing enormous atrocities across the country. He enabled the rebels to march into Freetown while conducting an operation called "Spare No Soul," and in the process cutting a swathe of destruction, murder, mayhem and rape across Sierra Leone.

Taylor was part of the planning of the operation, and he was an effective leader of these forces. At the very least, he knew that these forces were committing immense numbers of atrocities, and despite that knowledge he continued to provide vital aid and assistance, military arms, training, safe refuge in Liberia and in a whole variety of ways aided and abetted the commission of grave war crimes and crimes against humanity.

### **You have 62 witnesses against Taylor, so it sounds like you've built a strong case.**

Actually, our case involves 62 *linkage* witnesses, which are witnesses to link Taylor to the crime. We have 77 other witnesses who are witnesses to the crime itself and 11 other expert witnesses. There are a total of 150.

**Nonetheless, charges like these are difficult to prove. How confident are you in achieving a guilty verdict?**

As a general rule, prosecutors don't give opinions about witnesses or evidence. But we have strong and compelling evidence that is sufficient to convict him of each of the 11 counts in the indictment--that's our submission, and that's what we're prepared to do.

**Trials like these not only prosecute criminals, but help build legal institutions in struggling nations. Taylor's trial has been moved from Africa to the Netherlands. Will this dampen its impact?**

We have mixed feelings about the case being in Europe. The prosecution didn't move to have the venue of the trial changed to Europe, and we've been very proud of the fact that we tried our other cases at the scene of the crime, in Sierra Leone--unlike the Yugoslavia and Rwanda tribunals. But in the case of Taylor, regional leaders were very concerned that his trial in Sierra Leone could be destabilizing to a region that was just coming out of a long civil war. It was their request that the court move the trial outside the region.

**Sierra Leoneans have the most vested in the outcome. How will they be able to access a trial thousands of kilometers away?**

The courthouse [in Freetown] will remain open for people to watch the trial on television, and there will be an intensified outreach program, including thousands of meetings across the country and monthly video screenings showing highlights of the trial. We're expanding that effort to Liberia, as well. It's certainly my highest priority to maintain a closeness between the trial in the Hague and the situation in Sierra Leone.

**What would a guilty verdict mean for West Africa and for the world?**

A fair trial for Charles Taylor would itself be a very important contribution to justice, whatever the end result. On the other hand, as prosecutors, we've prepared a strong and compelling case that supports a verdict of guilt, and we think that such a verdict would send a clear message that no man is above the law, and that the age of leaders who could commit great atrocities against their own people and the people of other countries, and essentially get away with it--that age is really over. That message, we think, can help deter future crimes and protect victims of suffering.

**Kenya is the latest African country to boil over into violence. Does the Taylor trial have any implications for peace and justice in Kenya?**

I think so. I think that people there are reflecting on [past judgments against human-rights violators] constantly, and it's having a restraining effect. Obviously it's not restraining as much as we'd like, but it's restraining the situation, at the moment, from becoming worse than it is. People who believe very much in human rights are very excited about the work of these courts and are seeing an impact in their countries.

**Do people seem to believe that the work of international courts will create a more peaceful future?**

I heard people in Darfur saying, "Who's going to stop this? Ocampo will stop this!" They're putting quite a lot on the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court [Luis Moreno-Ocampo]. But people now really are pulling themselves back and watching their tracks and perhaps not going to the extremes that they would otherwise.

In Sierra Leone itself, we just went through a very contentious election in which the incumbent president's party lost power and the opposition gained power--with no significant violence. I've talked to people, even those that at one time had negative views of the court, who said that the fact that those who commit violence have seen what's happened to others has caused them to pull back and let the process go forward peacefully.

Allafrica.com

Thursday, 10 January 2008

## **Former Taylor Government Insider Testifies On Links to RUF**

GUEST BLOG

10 January 2008

The Hague

The monitors of former President Charles Taylor's trial report for [www.charlestaylortrial.org](http://www.charlestaylortrial.org) on Wednesday's evidence.

### **Former Taylor Government Insider Testifies On Links to RUF**

Today the Defense completed its cross-examination of Alex Tamba Teh, a Prosecution witness who testified about various RUF atrocities he witnessed Kono District in April 1998.

The Prosecution also began its direct examination of Varmuyan Sherif, a former member of Taylor's personal security force (the Special Security Service or "SSS"). Sherif's testimony provides evidentiary links between Taylor and the RUF.

### **Cross-examination of Teh Concludes**

This morning, defense counsel Andrew Cayley continued his cross-examination of Teh. The defense sought to establish that Teh was listed as a supervisor for RUF schools for the poor in Kono District under the name Isaac Teh, possibly in an effort to illustrate closer ties to the RUF. Seeking to undercut Teh's credibility, the Defense established that some of Teh's direct testimony was not contained in his prior witness statements and interview notes, including (1) RUF commander Rocky's genuine name (Emmanuel Williams) and (2) Teh's statement that he saw Sam Bockarie (a.k.a. Mosquito, commander of the RUF from 1998-1999) use a satellite phone for communication, refer deferentially to the other participant to the call by saying, "yes sir," and indicated that he had to travel to Liberia. Cayley expressed some frustration at the witness's refusal to answer questions directly, and on a number of occasions Judge Sebutinde intervened, requesting that Teh answer the questions put to him. Trying to further discredit the witness, defense counsel also asked him at length about certain witness payments made to him by the Court's victim services program and the Office of the Prosecutor.

Mohamed Bangura conducted a short re-examination of Mr Teh in which he revisited only one issue: Teh's request to become a Field Marshal when asked to join the rebels, and Mosquito's response that his boss Charles Ghankay Taylor was not even a five star general. Bangura established that Teh made a correction to his original witness statement in a later statement that incorporated this point, in order to rehabilitate his attacked credibility.

### **Prosecution Calls Linking Witness Varmuyen Sherif**

Lead prosecutor Brenda Hollis conducted the direct examination of Sherif, a 40 year-old man born in Voinjama in Liberia. Sherif was previously identified as "TF 1406" but waived protective measures and testified in open session, speaking in "Liberian English." Wearing traditional African clothing, Sherif was sworn in on the Koran.

Sherif testified that he was a battalion commander and later general supervisor in the United Liberian Movement for Democracy ("ULIMO") in the early 1990's, fighting against the NPFL (led by Taylor) and the RUF. In 1995, he was appointed as Assistant Director for Operations of the SSS, serving in the Executive Mansion in Monrovia, Liberia as part of a peace agreement involving the three warring factions in the country. He was subsequently appointed to that position by Taylor after his election to the presidency in August 1997, and served in that capacity until 1999/2000, essentially His immediate superior was Joseph Montgomery (Deputy Director for Administration in the SSS), who in turn reported to Benjamin Yeaten (Director of the SSS). He was transferred to Immigration from 2000-2003 and held various positions there (Deputy Chief of Security, Chief of Security, Assistant Commissioner of Operations and then Deputy Commissioner). From 2000 - 2003, Taylor also appointed him as Deputy Chief of Staff, Army Division.

Among the key points from Sherif's testimony today are :

- \* While fighting against the NPFL and the RUF, Sherif recalled that captured fighters from these groups included males and females youths as young as 12 years-old.
- \* In late 1998 or early 1999, Taylor called Sherif into his office and instructed him to go to RUF territory and bring Sam Bockarie (a.k.a., Mosquito, leader of the RUF) to Monrovia.
- \* Upon eventually reaching Buedu in Sierra Leone, Sherif was taken to Bockarie after identifying himself as Liberian and his position with the SSS. Wary of Sherif's identity, Bockarie took him to a "radio room" and instructed a radio operator to contact the Executive Mansion in Monrovia, whereupon a radio operator on the 5th floor of the mansion was contacted using the code "405." Sherif recognized the voice of the operator as a former NPLF man and Joseph Montgomery from the SSS came on the line to confirm for Bockarie that Sherif was acting on Taylor's instructions. Sherif later saw the long range radio system on the 5th floor of the Executive Mansion, which was separate from the mansion's other radio system.
- \* After Bockarie traveled to Monrovia, Sherif took him to his house. While preparing to take a bath, Bockarie removed a mayonnaise jar full of diamonds from his jacket pocket.
- \* After Bockarie met with Taylor in Monrovia, he thanked Sherif for being the first person to make it possible for him to meet Taylor, as all other communications had just been by radio. Bockarie also told Sherif that Taylor had given him money (USD) and a satellite phone.
- \* Taylor instructed Sherif to deliver a truckload of arms and ammunition to Bockarie at the border of Sierra Leone and Liberia. The Prosecution marked for identification photographs in which Sherif identified himself and others from Liberia delivering the load of weapons while in disguise to avoid detection. Sherif also testified concerning other deliveries of arms to Bockarie.
- \* Taylor told Sherif to tell former ULIMO fighters that they were free to go to RUF territory, and to contact a former senior ULIMO commander to travel to Sierra Leone work with Bockarie and encourage these fighters to join the RUF. Sherif recruited Abu Keita who agreed to work with Bockarie.
- \* Sherif attended a meeting with Keita and a number of other officials from Taylor's government in which they discussed how to carry out various attacks. Benjamin Yeaten (Director of the SSS) instructed Bockarie to have the RUF attack Guinea.
- \* Sherif heard Bockarie say on the BBC that he would not retreat from fighting in Sierra Leone unless his "father" told him to retreat, and that his "father" was Charles Taylor.

\* Sometime before the RUF attacked Freetown on January 6, 1999, Sherif saw Bockarie again in Liberia at an airfield in Mugabi County as arms and ammunition were being delivered by airplane, which were then delivered to Taylor's personal residence (White Flower) for distribution.

\* When a dispute developed within the RUF between Bockarie and Issa Sesay, Taylor invited them both to come to Liberia to discuss the issue amicably. They were flown to Monrovia and, after discussion, it was determined that Sesay would be the new commander of the RUF.

Testimony concluded earlier than expected when Sherif complained of a headache. Judge Sebutinde therefore adjourned the proceedings until tomorrow.

charlestaylortrial.org

Monday, 14 January 2008

Posted by Webmaster on January 14, 2008

### **Day 6 of Witness Testimony**

Proceedings have resumed and the defense team is present. Judge Sebutinde announces that the court has adjusted the hearing schedule as requested by the defense team.

Lead defense counsel Courtenay Griffiths continues his cross-examination of prosecution witness Varmuyan Sherif:

Def: On Friday I was asking you about one particular aspect of your testimony. You said you had seen Bockarie in possession of a jar of diamonds. I showed you passages in your first interview with the prosecution when you were asked about diamonds. (Defense points to a page of the witness's old interview with the prosecution.) Do you see where you were asked about diamonds and how you didn't see diamond transactions personally. What did you mean "I didn't see"?

Wit: I didn't see him doing diamond transactions.

Def: You've never seen a diamond transaction involving Taylor?

Wit: Yes. I did not see him particularly.

Def: Now (pointing to another page of the interview transcript) you see where you were again asked about diamonds. The name Eddie Kanneh is put to you. When you answered the prosecution here in court, you said Eddie Kanneh is a diamond dealer and that he has a connection with your ex-wife?

Wit: Yes, they both come from Bo, Sierra Leone.

Def: What was Kanneh's involvement with diamonds?

Wit: Kanneh told me he was business manager for RUF diamonds and he was the go-between for the RUF with the NPFL government.

Def: You understood that to be his responsibility and not that of Sam Bockarie?

Wit: Bockarie gave the position to Eddie Kanneh. Kanneh was working under Bockarie.

Def: His responsibility was diamond dealing?

Wit: He was always given the diamonds with instructions. He told me he had this position in the RUF and had been given it by Sam Bockarie.

Def: Do you accept that nowhere in your interview you mentioned seeing Sam Bockarie in possession of a jar of diamonds in Voinjama?

Wit: I had several interviews. In one of my interviews I said I saw Bockarie with diamonds.

Def: I'm asking about your first interview with the prosecution.

Wit: In my first interview we did not get to the diamond discussion.



Def: That's incorrect. You were asked on seven occasions in this interview about diamonds. You never mentioned seeing diamonds in the possession of Bockarie.

Wit: I don't know about that particular interview. I didn't do all the interviews on one day.

Def: I know you had several interviews. I'm only asking about the first interview. You never said you saw Bockarie with diamonds?

Wit: Yes.

Def: You also didn't mention seeing Bockarie executing five Kamajors in Kailahun. Do you accept that?

Wit: I mentioned it in the first interview.

Def: You didn't. You did later, but not in the first interview. I suggest you didn't mention either of those incidents is because you never went to fetch Bockarie at the request of Taylor.

Wit: That's not true.

Def: It's a total fabrication.

Wit: It's not a fabrication. I have nothing personal against Taylor. I'm telling the truth here.

Def: You told us that when you arrived in Voinjama, you met a senior intelligence officer who had traveled by helicopter from Monrovia?

Wit: Robert Biah landed in Tenembo (ph) and drove to Voinjama to check Bockarie's identification.

Def: It would have been much easier to transport Bockarie to Monrovia by helicopter?

Judge Sebutinde interrupts to say that this question was asked and answered last week. Defense says he has received further instructions on this from Charles Taylor, and Sebutinde allows the question.

Wit: The problem was with ECOMOG, and it was safer to move Bockarie by road.

Def: You told us last week that there were no facilities for a helicopter to land at the Executive Mansion.

Wit: A helicopter has never landed at the Executive Mansion.

Def: Is the Executive Mansion on 15 plus acres of land?

Wit: I did not say there wasn't space. I'm saying I never saw a helicopter land there.

Def: But one could land in front of the mansion, and a soccer ground within the grounds of the mansion, and a very large lawn at the rear of the mansion?

Wit: Yes.

Def: (Pointing to the interview transcript again) Here you're asked about helicopters. You described the helicopters coming to Foya as one with fatigues and one with camoflaug. Correct?

Wit: Yes.

Def: Then on this page you say one was fatigue and one was camoflauge. What color camoflauge?

Wit: Green mixed with black.

Def: Were there helicopters available to the gouvernement that were not those colors?

Wit: There were ATU helicopters.

Def: What color?

Wit: Fatigue and camoflauge. These helicopters were used to bomb Lofa and the surroundings. Green and black camoflauge.

Def: I want to ask about arms and the RUF. Would you agree that the vast majority of arms you know went to the RUF were bought by the RUF from former ULIMO combatants?

Wit: That's not true. Arms were coming through Roberts International airport. I also saw Zigzag Mazar delivering weapons. I saw Bockarie with Yeaten in Foya and an associate saw a truckload of arms.

Def: Do you agree that many commanders of the various militias and factions, following Taylor's elections, for a number of reasons, did things without the authority of Taylor?

Wit: Yes.

Def: For personal, financial, ethnic or tribal reasons. Do you agree?

Wit: Please ask in detail.

Def: The combatants from the various factions were not being paid regularly after the elections?

Wit: Taylor only paid those who were obligated to him?

Def: Most combatants were not paid?

Wit: Who was paying them?

Def: Were the former ULIMO combatants being paid after the election?

Wit: He assisted them with money. He gave 20,000 to distribute. He gave rice every month for one year to former ULIMO-K?

Def: Isn't it true that some commanders would sell arms illegally given them by the Liberian government in order to make money on the side?

Wit: Those in Lofa might have done there. I wasn't there and didn't witness it.

Def: Did ULIMO buy arms from ECOMOG officers and soldiers?

Wit: I don't know. I was not the leader of ULIMO. I was the commander at the battlefield. You should ask the leader of ULIMO.

Def: I'm suggesting you did buy arms illegally from ECOMOG.

Wit: No.

Def: Did ULIMO do private deals with Sierra Leonean military officers in the border area in addition to the official assistance from Sierra Leone?

Wit: That's true.

Def: Similar deals were being done with Guinean troops?

Wit: I'm not aware of that.

Def: Guinean soldiers sold their arms illegally to groups like ULIMO, didn't they?

Wit: ULIMO never had an arms shortage. Many of the arms came from captured areas. We took NPFL weapons too.

Def: Where Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea meet in Lofa, there was a brisk business in diamonds, arms and looted goods.

Wit: I don't deny it. That's war.

Def: That area is like the Wild West?

Wit: Yes, of course.

Def: I want to ask about (points to another page of the interview transcript) when you were asked, about 45 minutes into the interview. You were told that there would be a period of the interview "off the record". What did you talk about?

Wit: I don't know what that means.

Def: What was so sensitive that you talked about for 10 or more minutes during this interview?

Wit: I can't remember.

Def: Is there anything you'd want to talk to the OTP about "off the record"?

Wit: I can't remember.

Def: Were you made promises of money or any other benefit in exchange for certain evidence?

Wit: No.

Def: What were you talking about "off the record"?

Wit: I can't remember.

Def: I want to show you the correlation between interviews conducted with you and payments received by you. (Shows document.) After that interview, you received 70 US dollars. What was that for?

Wit: To cover transport to the area where they wanted to see me.

Def: But you were working in Monrovia at the time?

Wit: Yes, but not for the Special Court.

Def: Were you living in Monrovia at the time of the interview?

Wit: Yes.

Def: Was the interview in Monrovia?

Wit: Yes.

Def: What were your travel expenses to cover this interview?

Wit: It was given to me to cover my expenses.

Def: You were given 70 dollars on March 9. Then on September 8 and again on September 9, you were given a further 155 US dollars. What was that for?

Wit: They wanted me to bring an individual from Boma Hills and I had to hire a car to get there.

Def: You were paid although you attended no further interviews?

Wit: Sometimes the prosecution wanted me to help them get somebody, and they'd give me transportation to Nimba or Gbarnga.

Def: You were conducting investigations?

Wit: No. I was just getting individuals for them.

Def: How many witnesses did you manage to locate for the OTP?

Wit: Three persons, I think.

Def: When?

Wit: I can't remember.

Def: Was it in the period immediately after the February 2005 interview?

Wit: It was after that interview.

Def: Let's look at these payments in more detail. We see here details of the three payments I've asked about. You see the first was made on March 9. The reason is stated as "payment to source to assist OTP in locating witnesses". When we see the second payment of 100 dollars on September 8, it was for "reactivation of source development". What does that mean?

Wit: I don't know. I was given money to locate witnesses and cover expenses.

Def: What is "reactivation of source development"?

Wit: I don't know what that means. It was to cover expenses and locate people for them.

Def: You were further interviewed by the prosecution on the 8th and 9th of July 2006. (Points to summary of that interview.) I want to ask you about this. We see that this was supposedly a clarification interview conducted in Monrovia. Present were David Cunningham and Joseph Sesay. Do you recall it?

Wit: I don't know their names.

Def: But you remember being interviewed in July 2007?

Wit: I don't remember the people's names.

Def: We see here that the summary states the witness discussed Bockarie's communications with Taylor. You told us here in court that after the stopover in Voinjama, you drove to Wiesua where Bockarie was met, and you continued to Monrovia with his bodyguards?

Wit: Yes.

Def: In this interview you said it was at Gbarnga, not Wiesua?

Wit: It was Wiesua. When Taylor sent me back to the place I had left Bockarie, I went to Wiesua but had to wait because they were having a meeting in Gbarnga.

Def: Why in this interview did you say it was Gbarnga?

Wit: They wrote it wrong.

Def: I suggest you're lying about the whole trip and that's why your account is always changing?

Wit: I'm telling the truth.

Def: Gbarnga is a different place than Wiesua, isn't it? Yes or no?

Wit: Yes.

Def: In the final paragraph, you are reported as saying that in relation to the purchase of arms by the RUF from ULIMO, Taylor wanted to open Lofa for Bockarie to move back and forth and that people from Lofa should have free movement in Sierra Leone. Who are you quoting there about this?

Wit: There was an instruction from Taylor.

Prosecutor Brenda Hollis points out that this is a summary interview, and that the quote in the summary is from the witness himself. Defense says that if there's a quotation, it must refer to a transcript of the interview, with which the defense has never been provided. Prosecution says there was no transcript.

Judge Sebutinde agrees with prosecution that the quotes refer to a quote from the witness himself.

Defense counsel says he wants to see the original notes from the interviewer. He points out that the interview lasted two days, but that the summary is only three pages long. Prosecution: defense will get that. Defense says that in every instance of every summary, the defense would like to see full notes - and that this applies to all witnesses. Prosecution says that information in the original notes are put in total into a typed form. Prosecution will provide hand-written originals as requested.

Def: (to witness) Did you have a conversation with Taylor as described in that paragraph? Do you see you make references to opening corridors between Liberia and Sierra Leone. Are you referring to a conversation with Taylor?

Wit: Yes.

Def: When?

Wit: 1998.

Def: More specific?

Wit: 1998.

Def: Where did that conversation happen?

Wit: White Flower.

Def: Who else was there?

Wit: Osebio Demeh (ph) and Musa Cissa.

Def: You're lying.

Wit: I'm not.

Def: (points to another part of the interview summary) Here it says Taylor appointed Christopher Varmoh as NPFL commander for Lofa. True?

Wit: Yes.

Def: You clarified that you did not see the money transactions. Is that true?

Wit: I don't understand.

Sebutinde complains that she also doesn't follow and asks the interpreter to speak clearly.

Def: Did you ever witness a money transaction involving the sale of arms to the RUF?

Wit: Yes. When Superman came, he was buying arms in Voinjama and taking them to Sam Bockarie.

Def: Who handed the money over?

Wit: Taylor said he would provide money for Bockarie.

Def: I'm asking about the transaction you say you saw.

Wit: Superman had the money and was buying the arms.

Def: Whom did he give the money to.

Wit: Former fighters.

Def: From which factions?

Wit: All factions, including NPFL.

Def: So money was going to individual combatants?

Wit: Yes.

Def: What were you talking about when here it says “did not see money transactions”?

Wit: Superman went with Bockarie to Monrovia when I took him. I knew what Superman was doing and he used to explain it to me.

Def: Do you see where it says witness says arms to RUF were coming from all warring factions—from ULIMO, NPFL and Liberian Peace Council—and that Taylor initially stated all ULIMO arms should first be brought to Monrovia, but after the recruitment and deployment, Taylor ordered that all weapons from Lofa should be directly sent to Sierra Leone. At first this happened on a weekly basis, but then Bockarie took control of Lofa, and fighters took weapons to Sierra Leone all the time. RPGs, AK-47s, ammunition. Fighters were being paid 200-300/weapon. Witness states some weapons were exchanged for looted items from Freetown. Witness said this occurred after the Freetown invasion. Do you agree with all of that?

Wit: Yes.

Def: So the sale of arms was being conducted by individual combatants?

Wit: They did it individually following the instruction. Taylor later instructed me that the former combatants in Lofa should sell them to the RUF in Lofa or go to Sierra Leone to sell them. Taylor told me he gave money to Bockarie for the purchases.

Def: You’re aware the Freetown invasion took place in 1999?

Wit: The first one happened after the AFRC government was removed from power. That was at the start of 1998.

Def: On the next page, you see “the witness states...” that Liberian ex-combatants who were trading looted property were invited to Sierra Leone by Bockarie. Many people who crossed over were recruited into the RUF. Witness says ULIMO only came up in the area of Lofa County, and at this time the RUF were not dealing with a specific warring faction. Taylor did not have any specific influence with these people—only to the extent he was condoning free movement across the border. Private people were going to diamond mining areas. What did you mean, Taylor had no specific influence?

Wit: People were going there by themselves. Taylor provided a guarantee of security.

Def: Taylor didn’t have a great deal of influence over this lawless area, did he?

Wit: This lawlessness started after Bockarie’s visit. After the election, the area was very quiet. When Taylor gave the freedom to everybody, that’s when the lawlessness started.

Def: Do you agree that Taylor had very little influence in the area?

Wit: At the end of 1998/beginning of 1999 he deployed the army and police throughout Lofa.

Def: Do you agree that Taylor had little influence in the area? When do you say Taylor’s influence was diminished in that area?

Wit: I don’t understand.

Def: Was there a time when Taylor did not have any influence in that area?

Wit: After the elections Taylor never had control over the other warring factions' territories. But little by little he began deploying men and eventually took control over the entire area.

Court is adjourning until 11:00. With the half-hour delay in the video and audio feed to the media center, this live-blog will continue at 11:30.

### **Day 6 of witness testimony**

Posted by [Webmaster](#) on January 14, 2008

Welcome back to the live-blog of the trial of Charles Taylor before the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The trial is now entering its second week of witness testimony, and this morning we expect lead defense counsel Courtenay Griffiths to continue his cross-examination of prosecution witness Varmuyan Sherif. Once the cross-examination is finished, the prosecution will have an opportunity to question Sherif again on points brought up during the cross-examination.

As always, the running summary of court proceedings on this website should not be considered a transcript. We cannot guarantee its accuracy, although we try hard to be as accurate as possible.

Court was scheduled to resume at 9:00 this morning, but upon convening at that time, the defense team was not in the courtroom (although the accused, Charles Taylor was present and could be seen reading through documents). Special Court Registry officials reported to the judges that the defense team had forgotten to bring the key to their office, was locked out, and thus unable to get their robes and files. While security officers from the International Criminal Court, whose facilities the Special Court is using, work to open the door to the defense office, Presiding Judge Julia Sebutinde has adjourned proceedings until the defense team is ready. The session is expected to resume shortly after 9:15. With the half-hour delay in the video and audio feed to the media center, our coverage will begin at around 9:45 (8:45 in Sierra Leone and Liberia).



## Cocorioko

Monday, 14 January 2008

### **A child soldier's message of hope**

Written by Cocorioko Newspaper Limited

Salifu Kamara was born to poor, illiterate parents in the African nation of Sierra Leone. In 1996, when he was nine years old, he was abducted from his primary school in Bafodia by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the rebel army that fought a violent 10-year insurrection in his country. Witness to the rape of his sister, and after the murder of his parents, he was given a gun and forced to fight as a boy-soldier. At the close of the war Kamara escaped and was picked up by UN forces in the area. He now tours cities in America advancing the cause of Sierra Leone's young victims of war

I was captured in my hometown of Bafodia, a sleepy village near the city of Kabala, in northern Sierra Leone, and held captive for two months. Those horrible months were an eternity to me. I lost my parents and six siblings. The RUF raped my sister before my eyes and took her away to become a wife. I have not heard any news about her since that day and she is considered dead.

The RUF fighters slipped some kind of miracle herb into my tea, similar to the drug ecstasy, that transformed me beyond recognition. I became bold, fearless and eager for adventure. I was given an AK47 and ordered to guard the RUF commandos on a 24-hour shift.

Several boy-soldiers who resisted or tried to escape were pinned down, screaming, while the rebels' trademark AFRC-RUF was carved into their bare chests with a hot, sharp object. The RUF hated to be addressed as rebels, calling themselves freedom fighters for the "people's liberation army" instead.

I was brutalised and tied up, but miraculously I escaped and fled from Kabala to Freetown. I was found by the United Nations forces when the civil war was over.

A former prosecutor for the Special Court in Sierra Leone told me that, during one of the hearings, a child-soldier had said: "I killed people. I am sorry. I did not mean it." The prosecutor had hugged him with tears in his eyes and said: "Of course you didn't mean it. I forgive you."

I came to live in America last year. At first I asked my roommate when the lights would go off. He laughed and said: "The lights in America stay on 24 hours a day." I am 21 now and I am disabled; I walk with crutches, but my vision of the future is clear. In Sierra Leone, I founded the Global Network for Disabled Youths to cater for the needs of young war victims.

Presently, there is newfound optimism under the recently elected president, Ernest Bai Koroma. But it will take time before there is any real rehabilitation: the country is choked with basic needs. Electricity is sporadic, and most people in Freetown have gone without it for a long time.

With the help of UN officials and well-wishers in the US, I'm taking classes to prepare for college. I'm passionate about getting a higher education and strongly believe that education of any sort is the key to dispelling darkness from young minds.

I also go on tours of cities in the US, speaking about the plight of child-soldiers around the world. I want to send out the message that children should not be used as pawns in wars that adults choose to fight. I

believe that the enormous resources spent on conflict could be diverted into poverty reduction, education and job training for neglected young people around the world.

Speaking at the UN, my appeal fell on fertile ground. I addressed the world's peacemaking body on alleviating the appalling conditions that fuel wars in the first place. As an ex-soldier, disabled and still young, I am a testament to the impact wars can have on children, a poster child for others who are still plagued with nightmares.

Images showing victims of war and the violation of their human rights feature daily on TV screens, but these images become routine news. To hear about atrocities from someone who has served as a child-soldier makes the situation more real. I always emphasise that children who have been abused are just the same as other children, who desire love, affection and protection from their parents and the global community.

I hope my message continues to gain attention and momentum. I hope to find peace and happiness for myself and others like me. I believe that even a child can change the world through a creative, peaceful process.

- Salifu Kamara was talking to Roland B Marke, a Sierra Leonean writer in the US.

United Nations  Nations Unies

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**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries  
11 January 2008**

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

**Newspaper Summary**

**Taylor Aide continues with 'evidentiary' links between Taylor and RUF rebels**

*(Public Agenda, New Vision, The Parrot, The Inquirer, The Informer, Heritage, National Chronicle and The News)*

- Testifying Thursday in The Hague for a second day on Thursday, Varmuyan Sheriff claimed that Charles Taylor provided vehicles to carry weapons and ammunition in rice sacks to the Sierra Leone border, where they were distributed to rebels fighting in that country's civil war. He told a war crimes tribunal that Taylor arranged the transport of the weapons from his presidential mansion to the Sierra Leone border in violation of a U.N. arms embargo. He sometimes conscripted villagers to carry unbearably heavy loads on their heads for two days through jungles when the main roads were too dangerous for vehicles, Sheriff said.
- Sheriff also claimed that a guest house existed in Monrovia for Sierra Leonean rebels. The guest house, he said, was near Taylor's residents and several foreign embassies.
- Sheriff's testimony was the clearest indication yet in the trial that Taylor had such well-established communication lines with Sierra Leone rebels. Varmuyan Sheriff, a former assistant director of operations of Taylor's personnel Security Service, was the first of nearly 60 witnesses from Taylor's inner circle whom the prosecution plans to call to support allegations that he [Taylor] orchestrated atrocities during Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war from Liberia.
- But Defense attorney Courtenay Griffiths argued with Sheriff over his claim that he was Taylor's confidante, and suggested his job was little more than to ensure Taylor's motorcade had fuel and full tires.

**USAID Donates Cash to Buttress Truth Commission**

*(The News, The Informer, Public Agenda, The Inquirer, Heritage and National Chronicle)*

- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has contributed US\$500,000 to support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Liberia. This brings the total US Government support to US\$900,000 since the TRC was established in 2004. Speaking Thursday at the signing ceremony in Monrovia, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jordan Ryan said "Since the TRC's inception, USAID has proved itself to be a committed donor in advancing the work of the Commission".
- At the same time, media reports suggest that public hearings held by Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), have continued with victims of the civil war giving accounts of horrendous atrocities committed during the period.

**Radio Summary**

**ECOWAS Empowers Civil Society Organizations in Liberia**

- Correspondents said that ECOWAS Special Representative to Liberia Ansumana Cissay yesterday presented US\$200,000 to five civil society organizations to build their capacities. He said that the donation was part of ECOWAS regional integration process and that each organization will receive US\$40,000.
- Planning and Economic Affairs Minister Toga McIntosh said that managing resources was the greatest problem facing Liberian nongovernmental organizations, but challenged the organizations to form a coalition to monitor one another as they expend the ECOWAS fund.

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)*

### **State Consultative Committee Calls Holding of Municipal Elections**

- In a statement, the Special Joint State Consultative Committee which was set up by the National Elections Commission (NEC) to look into all elections-related issues, called for the conduct of municipal and chieftaincy elections before the end of 2008, but suggested the need to resolve all technical deficiencies for which the it (Committee) was formed before the election can be held. NEC Chairman James Fromayan said that the NEC is prepare to carry out the recommendations of the Committee.

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)*

### **Victim Tells TRC of Cruel Treatment Meted against Him**

- Correspondents said that a resident of Sinoe County Mr. Augustine Toebay told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that fighters of the one of the warring factions, the Liberia Peace Council in 1994 meted cruel treatment against him including forcing him to have sexual intercourse with a dead woman.
- Mr. Toebay narrated that the fighters arrested him and his brother because they possessed a rifle which they used for hunting before the faction entered the Region. The rebels tortured them and later killed his brother while he remained and used to carry arms and ammunition at which time he witnessed atrocities being committed by the rebels including the execution of a Pastor in the face of his pregnant wife.
- He alleged that amidst a debate over the sex of the child which the woman was carrying, the rebels ripped-open her belly, but as they could not identify the child's sex, the rebels cruelly stitched the woman's belly who was already dead, and later forced him (Augustine) to sex the corpse or risk being tortured or killed.

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)*

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**Newspaper Summary**

**Key Taylor Bodyguard Testifies Against Taylor at Special Court**

*(The Inquirer, The Informer, Heritage, Daily Observer, National Chronicle and The News)*

- A former insider working for former Liberian President Charles Taylor's Special Security Services, on Wednesday, testified at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, against the former Liberian leader.
- He stated that through secret cells, Mr. Taylor had ties with the RUF commander Sam Bockarie in Sierra Leone. More specifically, Mr. Varmuyan Sheriff told the Court that the Presidential Mansion in Monrovia had a special communication cell linked with the RUF.

**Cholera Outbreaks in Grand Kru and Maryland Counties**

*(The News and National Chronicle)*

- Addressing UNMIL regular press briefing on Wednesday, Liberia's Acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Moses Pewu, spoke of outbreaks of cholera in Grand Kru and Maryland Counties. Dr. Pewu said 163 cases of watery cholera were reported in both counties with at least two deaths being recorded so far. He however said the County Health Teams and with an international NGO, Merlin, were sensitizing the residents, through the use of health messages, on the causes and dangers of cholera and how to prevent it.

**Three ECOBANK Employees Charged for fraud**

*(National Chronicle, The Informer and Daily Observer)*

- Police in Monrovia on Wednesday charged three employees of the ECOBANK and forwarded them to court for prosecution for their alleged involvement in a US\$9,500 theft at the Sinkor Branch of the bank. Those arrested and charged were identified as Adam Johnson, Isaac Karngar and Michael Derrick.
- This is not the first time that employees at the bank have stolen money from customers' accounts. It can be recalled that in 2005, a group of employees secretly withdrew US\$307,000 from private accounts at the bank. In October last year, three persons including a former employee of the bank were sentenced to five years imprisonment each after being found guilty of stealing from the institution.

**Government Gives L\$26M to boost Compulsory Primary Education**

*(National Chronicle, The Informer and Daily Observer)*

- The Government of Liberia has given more than 26 million Liberian dollars in support of the Free and Compulsory Primary Education programme initiated by the administration. The money which was distributed among more than two thousand schools is intended for expenses associated with the daily running of the schools.

**Radio Summary**

**Cholera Breaks out in South-eastern Counties**

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)*

**Liberian Witness Says Taylor Had Links with Sierra Leonean Rebels**

- At the ongoing trial in The Hague of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, the first Liberian witness, the former Deputy Director of the Special Security Service Varmuyan Sheriff testified that former President Taylor had direct links with the former Sierra Leonean rebels, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).
- The witness recalled that Taylor once sent him on a mission to RUF territory to bring to Liberia former RUF Commander Sam Bukarie who, upon his (Varmuyan) arrival to the RUF territory, used a two-way radio to call the Executive Mansion (the Liberian Presidency) to confirm whether Taylor had sent for him.

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)*

### **President Reiterates Commitment to Lead Anti-HIV/AIDS Campaign**

- An Executive Mansion statement said that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf reiterated her Government's commitment to mounting a vigorous and sustained campaign against HIV/AIDS pandemic adding that Liberia needs to break free of the disease if national renewal is to be achieved to the fullest. The Liberian leader highlighted the problem of rape which she said continues to remain prevalent in the society despite efforts by state-holders to curtail the disease.

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)*

### **Liberian Woman narrates how she was Gang-raped by Rebels**

- Narrating her ordeal at the ongoing public hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) yesterday, Emelia Densia accused the defunct Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy rebels of gang-raping her, forcing her to drink her urine and gashing her body with a bayonet as a result of which doctors have said that she now developed cancer and could die anytime. Emelia stated that the incident occurred at Gbar near Bomi and Grand Cape Mount Counties.

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)*

### **Former Presidential Candidate Tubman Refutes Coup Plot Links**

- Former Presidential Candidate Winston Tubman told a news conference yesterday that it was untrue that he was part of a plot to overthrow the Government and ascend as head of an interim government. He stressed that he has never been approached by those who wrote the email message on *FrontPage Africa*, a US-based online news group in relation to the plot. Cllr. Tubman called on President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to thoroughly probe into the alleged coup plot so that those innocent may be cleared and the guilty be punished.
- Regarding the ongoing TRC public hearings, Cllr. Tubman said that the process was flawed and that the TRC would not achieve its mandate by leading to genuine reconciliation in the Country in that many Liberians, who instigated, funded and even fought in the cruel conflict today hold high positions in the Country.

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)*

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