

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awoko

Monday, 14 November 2011

Women and children continue to suffer from...

Forced marriages, human trafficking & ritual killings

Winston Ojukutu-Macauley Jnr.

The slow pace or non-existence of justice and fair play in the judicial system consisting of judges, law courts, police, prosecuting officers, prisons, and social services, with the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone at its apex, and presently headed by a woman, continues to fail scores of women and children, particularly girls who are kidnapped, raped, trafficked, forced or dragged into early marriages, according to the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.

In page 55 of its 4th Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, which was recently presented to the President and Parliament of Sierra Leone Pursuant to Section 24 (1) of The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act (Act No. 9) 2004, revealed that during the Human Rights Commission's (HRCSL) community engagement with the civil society and community leaders in district headquarters towns in the year under review, "early/forced marriage, emerged as one of the most persistent occurrence of gender-based violence in the communities."

"This was buttressed by UNICEF's survey on teenage pregnancy in Sierra Leone in 2010, which revealed that apart from school going girls, most people who became pregnant at teenage level were girls who had been forced into early marriage," the report stated.

Kadijatu Saccoh for obvious reasons was at first reluctant to talk to Awoko three weeks running until she was assured of protection.

She is by all accounts a reasonable and very balanced woman today, but she has had to fight and even abandon her family in Lungi to get where she is today at Tengbeh Town, trading in second clothing.

"I come from a family of five sisters, and I watched each of my elder sisters disappear. They were taken out of school in Port Loko and sent to Makeni, Kono and Guinea and brought back as wives. When I was 15 my father, a Police Officer at the airport, showed me a picture of man who was coming from Makeni to take me as his wife. I was shocked, because I thought my father had changed especially when I was doing so well at school. I refused to marry him, and for that I was abused, physically and mentally-my elder sister Mariama told me I would give my father a heart attack, or my mum will be punished if I kept fighting and refusing to marry someone I thought was too old for me."

From time to time whilst trying to go to school, and

resisting the marriage, I witnessed two of my sisters suffered horrific domestic violence. And each time they were hurt, my father, mother and aunties will go and talk to them. Every time the news reached home, I thought this time, they are going to rescue them, but instead they would go and lecture them about being better wives, whilst sitting there with broken ribs, swollen faces and battered spirits."

"With no one to turn to and no place to run to for help, I decided for the first time to get a boy-friend; but that too was a bad decision, because he too ended-up abusing me and later raping me, when I refused to have sex with him at night when he came home drunk.

Contd. Page 5

Forced marriages, human trafficking & ritual killings

From Page 2

And whilst raping me he will tell me, your father is a Policeman but nothing is going to happen. And with no family or friend to help me, I decided to find money to travel to Freetown," Kadijatu lamented.

Kadijatu Saccob's story is not a unique one. Nor is it uncommon. Indeed, there is the story of Jariatu Bah, 17 years old, who is presently in hospital here in Freetown nursing her wounds from a beating she got after returning home two months of married life that turned out to be unbearable despite the wealth that was showered on by her rejected husband, a 43 year-old trader of Sani Abacha Street.

The Police are supposedly investigating this matter. According to Jariatu Bah, she has never experienced love growing up.

She told *Awoko*: "I was groomed to understand the rules. My house is an environment of fear, there is no such thing as contradictions between the independence and hope I was learning at school before being forced into marriage," she said, feeling very much let-down by her family and society.

Experts at UNICEF, CONCERN and other NGOs dealing with this issue told *Awoko* that "these women and girls end-up feeling very lonely and sometimes very desperate." Christine Bradford, a Gender Based expert

said "one of the major tumbling block is that teachers and police are afraid of interfering in this matter, always citing tradition and accusing us of trying to change their culture.

With cases like these still evident in our society, the Human Rights Commission strongly condemns early and forced marriages and calls on the Government and communities "to adhere to section 46 (1) of the Child Rights Act 2007, which criminalizes marriage of persons under the age of 18 years."

Meanwhile, Faith Alliance against Slavery and Trafficking (FAAST), a non-governmental organization, which works closely with community groups (Village Parents Groups) in over 38 communities nationwide, reported that 22 cases of human trafficking were charged to court in 2010.

According to the HRCSL, the FAAST report further revealed that 5 victims were trafficked out of the country (Liberia, Ghana/Nigeria, Guinea/Conakry and Ivory Coast) and 12 were trafficked internally.

And those 3 victims were killed (2 males, 1 female) during or after ritual activities and illicit removal of body parts.

One victim was re-united directly with the family and 2 placed in shelter home for rehabilitation.

According to UNICEF, reported forms of child trafficking in an international context are known to involve labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, criminal activities, adoption, armed conflict and begging.

Rwandan Minister Talks On Prisoners' Situation

The Rwandan Minister of Internal Security, Mussa Fazil Harelimana, last week met with a visiting delegation from the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

They discussed the state of Sierra Leonean war crimes prisoners who are currently serving their sentences in Mpanga, Southern Province.

"The delegation has met with our side to review the recommendations and instructions on issues to do with money and access to telephones", the minister said.

Eight war crimes prisoners were sentenced by the Special Court for Sierra Leone jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations and are serving their respective sentences, ranging from 15- 52 years. They claim that their living conditions are not satisfactory.

The allegations by the prisoners prompted a two woman delegation composed of Binta Mansaray the court's registrar and her deputy Fidelma Donlon, to come and verify the concerns raised by the convicts.

Harelimana noted that every inmate is supposed to use \$150 for communication every month which they fail to exhaust prompting taking back money to the court.

"Their issue has been that they want the unutilized money on telephony to be paid to them in cash which we cannot do as government because we implement the

recommendations of the special court for Sierra Leone", he said.

According to a source that attended the closed door meeting yesterday, the delegation which is yet to give out their full observations on their findings, said that the inmates have been accorded full rights as required by the United Nations. Harelimana added: "All these were lies and the delegation have found out that we have observed the Memorandum of Understanding."

The convicts had complained that they have been denied their West African food and cannot cope with East African meals, cannot access medication and want to be relocated to Europe which, according to sources, is their intentions to help their wives seek asylum in the guise of being close to their husbands.

The minister said the allegations were baseless noting that the court brought in a chef skilled in West African meals to train prison chefs how to prepare the special meals for the inmates.

He said that the delegation also witnessed how the prison staff conducted their trainings on prison management to meet international standards as required by the UN.

Credit Torchlight Communications

Concord Times (Freetown)

Friday, 11 November 2011

Sierra Leone: Leone, Rwanda Envoys Discuss Bilateral Ties

Ralph Ese'donnu Sawyerr

Freetown — During a courtesy call on the Sierra Leone Ambassador to Senegal, HE Khadijatu Bassir over the weekend at the Sierra Leone Embassy in Dakar, the Ambassador of Rwanda to Senegal, HE Gerard Ntwari has discussed bilateral issues particularly the Special Court for Sierra Leone with regards Sierra Leone war crime convicts imprisoned in Rwanda emphasizing that the issue and other related concerns of the prisoners are entirely the affairs of the Special Court and not that of the Government of Sierra Leone or that of the government of Rwanda.

The issue of the Special Court was raised as a result of the request made to the government of Sierra Leone by families of war crime convicts currently imprisoned in Rwanda for provision to be made for them to visit their incarcerated relatives. The families complained that it is very expensive on their part to travel to Rwanda and asked the government to intervene by transferring the prisoners back to Sierra Leone.

Ambassador Ntwari noted that though Rwanda is just a custodian of the prisoner, they are well taken care of as the prison where they are housed meets international standards and prisoners' rights are maintained. He added that Sierra Leone is not the only country with prisoners in Rwanda but prisoners were also accepted from Arusha in Tanzania for genocide crimes.

When asked by Ambassador Bassir as to how Rwanda rose from a country at war to be one that has developed and gained international recognition even to the point of being invited to the Commonwealth, Ambassador Ntwari replied: "It has been a long, difficult and gradual process but we have tried and still coping. However, let me say this strongly, Rwandans have decided to sacrifice and put their country above self for the development of their nation." He added that both Rwandans at home and abroad joined in the developmental process and the nation's agenda for positive change.

"Our aim is to strengthen bilateral relationship especially with African countries, encourage trade, tourism and the exchange of culture and ideas on how to develop further. Ambassador Bassir requested that they work together as it would be in the interest of both post conflict countries to further strengthen their bilateral ties and exchange concrete and practical ideas on developmental issues, especially on trade, democracy and as to how Rwanda managed its justice system to allow perfect peace to reign.

Ambassador Bassir thanked Ambassador Ntwari for his visit and his country for accepting our war crimes prisoners. She commended Rwanda for being one of the decent countries in Africa with a baseline infrastructural development.

Also last week, Ambassador Bassir met the Ambassador of Cape Verde to Senegal, HE Francisco Pereira da Veiga at his Corniche West Embassy in Dakar where she expressed similar concerns for the strengthening of bilateral ties between the two countries and exchange of developmental ideas, trade and tourism for which Cape Verde is supreme.

Since Ambassador Bassir is yet to present her credentials to the Government of Cape Verde, she urged her counterpart to help fast track the presentation.

Africa Review (Kenya)

Monday, 14 November 2011

Sierra Leonean Justice minister visits war prisoners in Rwanda

By XINHUA

Sierra Leone's deputy Justice minister Bockari Arrow John on Sunday visited eight countrymen jailed in Rwanda since November 2009, an official source disclosed.

The eight Sierra Leone nationals were sentenced by the Special Tribunal on Sierra Leone (SCSL) for war crimes and transferred to Rwanda where they are serving their jail terms.

According to the Rwandan government, the Sierra Leonean official expressed satisfaction that detention conditions where the prisoners are being held met international standards. "The Rwandan jail accommodating the Sierra Leonean detainees is of international standards," the Rwandan government news release quoted the Sierra Leonean minister as saying.

The eight former rebels, sentenced by the SCSL for atrocities perpetrated during the civil war in Sierra Leone, are principally three officials of the United Revolutionary Front (URF), three others of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and two officials of the Civil Defense Forces (CDF).

"All these prisoners will serve sentences ranging from 23 to 50 years without the option of fines," said the deputy director-general of Rwanda Prison Services, Ms Mary Gahonzire.

The Sierra Leoneans are being jailed in the Mpanga prison in southern Rwanda, 106 km away from the capital Kigali. It was built to accommodate suspects who committed genocide and sentenced by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which is based in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha.

Jambonews

Wednesday, 9 November 2011

<http://www.jambonews.net/actualites/20111109-rwanda-les-autorites-carcerales-accusees-de-torture-et-mauvais-traitements/>

Rwanda: les autorités carcérales accusées de torture et mauvais traitements

Huit prisonniers sierra-léonais purgeant leur peine au Rwanda se plaignent de « traitements inhumains » dont ils feraient l'objet depuis leur arrivée dans les prisons rwandaises. Condamnés par le tribunal spécial pour la Sierra Leone (TSSL) pour les atrocités commises pendant la guerre civile, ces huit prisonniers se disent « privés de soins médicaux, menacés de mort par les gardiens, battus, torturés, mal-nourris et contraints à des travaux durs de menuiserie et maçonnerie notamment », selon un article publié le 16 octobre 2011 par « The Exclusive Newspaper », un journal Sierra-léonais.

Les huit condamnés du tribunal spécial pour la Sierra Leone qui purgent leurs peines au Rwanda sont, trois anciens responsables du Front révolutionnaire uni (RUF), trois autres du Conseil révolutionnaire des forces armées (AFRC) et deux responsables des Forces de défense civile (CDF) pendant la guerre. Ils purgent des peines allant de 15 à 52 ans de prison au Rwanda, où ils ont été transférés en 2009 après leurs jugements et condamnations.



Le TSSL a été établi en 2002 par les Nations unies pour juger les plus importants responsables des crimes commis durant la guerre civile (1991-2001) en Sierra-Leone. Le seul autre procès du TSSL encore en cours se tient aux Pays-Bas, pour des raisons de sécurité, il s'agit de celui de l'ancien président libérien Charles Taylor qui est jugé à La Haye, pour son implication dans la guerre civile en Sierra Leone. Ces prisonniers sierra-léonais condamnés par le TSSL ont été transférés en 2009 à la prison de Mpanga, dans le Sud du Rwanda, en vertu d'un Mémoire d'entente signé entre la Cour et Kigali. Cette prison avait été spécialement conçue pour accueillir les condamnés du Tribunal pénal international pour le Rwanda (TPIR) jugés à Arusha (Tanzanie) pour leur participation au génocide de 1994. En mars dernier le Rwanda a signé un accord avec le TSSL pour accueillir les condamnés qui ne peuvent rester à Freetown faute d'établissement pénitentiaire aux normes des Nations Unies.

Les actes de torture sont courants dans les établissements carcéraux rwandais. Ces établissements sont qualifiés par bon nombre d'observateurs de « prisons-mouroirs » en raison du taux de mortalité qui y est très élevé.

Par exemple des agents de la Police Nationale du Rwanda ont tué au moins 20 détenus pour le seul mois de novembre 2007, a déclaré Human Rights Watch dans un rapport publié à cette époque. Selon les rapports du « Bureau de la démocratie, des droits humains et du travail » du Département d'État des États-Unis d'Amérique, des dizaines de milliers de détenus arbitrairement arrêtés et illégalement détenus dans les prisons rwandaises surchargées sont morts sans jugement dans les mains de l'État. Ce Département a recensé 860 décès en 1997, 3.300 décès en 1998, 1.148 décès en 1999, 1100 décès en 2000, 708 décès en 2001. Comme bon nombre de prisonniers n'étaient pas officiellement enregistrés, ces chiffres alarmants ne révèlent que le bout de l'iceberg. Ceux qui ne meurent pas vivent dans des conditions particulièrement inhumaines et subissent à la longue les effets débilissants du surpeuplement carcéral, sans compter ceux qui succombent suite à des tortures. Les témoignages de ceux qui ont pu sortir de ces prisons et s'exiler sont bouleversants.

Certains des décès attribués à la police semblent constituer des exécutions extrajudiciaires, selon Human Rights Watch. Leur rapport de 2007 totalisant 37 pages et est intitulé « Il n'y aura pas de procès : Détenus abattus par la police et imposition de punitions collectives », est basé sur des douzaines d'entretiens avec des familles de victimes, des témoins et autres personnes.

Les prisonniers politiques, nombreux dans les prisons rwandaises, ne sont pas non plus épargnés par ces traitements inhumains et tortures, selon plusieurs sources. C'est le cas entre autres de NTAGANDA Bernard Président du parti PS Imberakuri. Son parti ne cesse de déplorer les tortures dont fait l'objet leur président, condamné le 11 février dernier par la Haute cour de Kigali à quatre ans de prison ferme. Arrêté en juin dernier, l'opposant a toujours clamé son innocence, affirmant que les poursuites engagées contre lui étaient politiquement motivées. Ce dernier est emprisonné dans des conditions inhumaines : il est gardé en isolation totale dans un trou-cachot sans lumière et l'interdiction de recevoir sa ration alimentaire de la part de sa famille et amis. Son parti soupçonne sérieusement le gouvernement de Kigali de chercher à « tuer Ntaganda par la faim, la torture physique et le désespoir ».

Victoire Ingabire, une autre opposante incarcérée elle aussi au Rwanda, n'est pas en reste, on ne cesse de dénoncer les conditions de sa détention dans la célèbre prison rwandaise « LE 1930 ». Déjà dès son arrestation en octobre 2010, « elle a passé deux nuits assise et menottée », avait indiqué son parti le FDU, soulignant que « son matelas et des draps » avaient été confisqués. « La nourriture qui lui avait été portée pour son déjeuner a été retournée intacte le soir même. « L'eau et le seau (lui) ont été refusés. Les conditions de détention de Madame Ingabire Umuhiza, avaient été qualifiées d' »intolérables et immorales » par son parti. Pourtant à ce jour, pendant que son procès, que nombreux qualifient de « comédie judiciaire » (car on ne sait distinguer le juge du procureur), suit son cours, les conditions de sa détention ne se sont pas améliorées. La trésorière du parti FDU-Inkingi, Alice Muhirwa, a dénoncé il y a une semaine dans une interview à la presse, des conditions déplorables de sa détention, notamment, » isolement, intimidations, insultes, harcèlement, etc..« .

Suite à ces nouvelles accusations venant de prisonniers sierra-léonais, les autorités pénitentiaires rwandaises ont pris le devant pour démentir. Le Commissaire général du Service correctionnel du Rwanda, le général Paul Rwarakabije, dans un entretien au quotidien progouvernemental New Times s'est chargé lui-même de désavouer les ex combattants. « Les prisonniers se plaindront toujours, mais la réalité est que nous leur avons accordé plus que ce qui est nécessaire. Ils reçoivent fréquemment des visites de leurs proches et ont droit à des visites conjugales (de leurs épouses). Ce sont des prisonniers internationaux et nous les traitons de façon spéciale », a affirmé l'ancien chef des Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), toujours actives dans l'Est de la RDC.

Suite à la grogne des détenus sierra léonais, le TSSL a dépêché des émissaires à Kigali, qui ont été reçus ce lundi 7 novembre par le ministre rwandais de l'intérieur Moussa Fasil. Au cœur des débats bien sûr, les accusations de maltraitance et torture qu'auraient subies les prisonniers sierras léonais. Ces émissaires du TSSL ont pu également visiter la prison de Mpanga où sont détenus les prisonniers mécontents de leurs conditions. Cependant rien n'a filtré après cette visite de la prison.

Le Rwanda fait régulièrement la une des médias, en raison des nombreuses violations des Droits de l'Homme dont il est constamment accusé notamment par des ONG telles que Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch ou Reporters sans Frontières.

Dans le classement mondial de la liberté de la presse de Reporters Sans Frontières publié chaque année, le Rwanda se trouve régulièrement au bas du classement (169 cette année), juste devant l'Erythrée (173e et dernière position cette année), la Corée du Nord (172e) et le Turkménistan.

Dans un tel climat de violation constante des droits fondamentaux des citoyens ordinaires, journalistes ou opposants politiques, comment les droits de détenus condamnés parfois à de lourdes peines peuvent-ils être assurés ?

Par Jean Mitari

Africa Renewal (United Nations)

Saturday, 12 November 2011

Sierra Leone: UN in Post-War Reconstruction - Nation's Success Story

Countries emerging from conflicts often face huge development challenges. With support from the UN Peacebuilding Commission, Sierra Leone is a showcase of how a country can transit from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, as reported by Africa Renewal's Kingsley Ighobor and Mike Fleshman.

"The war is over, go and enjoy life," Sierra Leone's former president, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, declared at a January 2002 symbolic burning of weapons and ammunition to mark the end of the country's civil war. As smoke from the weapons spiralled away at Lungi, in eastern Sierra Leone, he added: "The curfew is hereby lifted." Sierra Leoneans celebrated the end of a decade-old war that had killed 150,000 people and wrecked the country's social infrastructure.

A massive UN peacekeeping operation involving 17,000 troops had disarmed 45,000 combatants, including 6,774 child soldiers. In 2006, UN troops began to withdraw, despite concerns that Sierra Leone's weak national institutions could not undertake the task of reconstruction on their own. The UN Security Council referred these concerns to the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). In December 2006 the PBC approved \$35 million to support programmes for capacity building, democracy, good governance, justice, security, youth employment and other tasks.

Sierra Leone was one of the Commission's first beneficiaries. The Security Council established the Commission in December 2005 to coordinate with international donors, financial institutions, governments and troop-contributing countries to "marshal resources" and develop "integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery."

Countries emerging from conflict need peacebuilding, argues Michael Von Schulenburg, the executive representative of the UN Secretary-General in Sierra Leone and head of the country's peacebuilding programme.

"Peacebuilding is access to water, to education, to basic health care - access to opportunities," Mr. Von Schulenburg explains in an interview with Africa Renewal.

The transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding is often difficult, notes Mr. Von Schulenburg. But it is essential to enable the UN to better align its priorities with socio-economic and political needs of a country after war.

Mr. Von Schulenburg believes that Sierra Leone has had an exemplary peacebuilding programme. "We don't have armed groups," he says. "They are all integrated. And the combatants have not become criminals, as so often happens." The UN has also implemented a community small-arms collection programme, to gather up weapons not handed in during the formal disarmament exercise.

According to a 2009 evaluation of peacebuilding projects commissioned by the Sierra Leonean government, the UN Integrated Office for Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Support Office in New York, many of the key goals have been met. The UN Development Programme, which managed most of the projects, achieved an 87 per cent completion rate. "Measured on the scale of budget delivery, this is clearly a remarkable performance," states the evaluation.

An emergency programme to support the energy sector brought an increase in power capacity from 25 megawatts to 31 megawatts in the capital, Freetown, and from 0.5 megawatts to 5 megawatts in Bo and

Kenema, two of Sierra Leone's larger cities. A project aimed at promoting youth empowerment through micro-credit benefited 4,500 young women, placed 1,000 unskilled youths in training institutions and 300 others in apprenticeship programmes in official institutions.

To enhance capacity in the justice system, another project supported the training and hiring of senior barristers, legal officers, state counsels, clerks and support staff. As a result, a backlog of 700 cases was cleared within two years, and current court cases are being heard much faster.

Mr. Von Schulenburg has recommended that peacebuilding operations in Sierra Leone conclude in 2013. A decision on the end date will be taken by the Security Council. But even if the peacebuilding activities wind down, regular UN agencies will continue their support for the country's development efforts, he adds.

The general elections in 2012 will test Sierra Leone's nascent democracy. There are concerns that the elections could lead to violence.

Mr. Von Schulenburg maintains that such concerns are justified, but manageable citing the success of a recent by-election in a diamond district with high unemployment.

There is a huge unemployment challenge in Sierra Leone, however. In 2010 the World Bank estimated Sierra Leone's unemployment at 80 per cent.

During a visit in 2007, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also raised concerns about the country's high unemployment.

Sierra Leone's main income-generating sources are in the extractive sector - gold, diamonds, bauxite and rutile. But as a 2011 report by experts of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union pointed out, in Africa investments have been mainly in the extractive sector, which produces few jobs.

Preparing Sierra Leone for an economic boom will be vital for preventing future conflicts. The country's abundant natural resources include "Gold, iron ore, diamonds, titanium, bauxite, you name it. Now oil and gas, potentially," he notes. "So this country could become very rich suddenly. And how do you manage these?"

Currently, the data on the country's untapped wealth contrasts starkly with the poor state of its social development. A 2011 World Bank report states that life expectancy in Sierra Leone is 48 years, while the adult literacy rate is only 41 per cent. If used properly, the proceeds from Sierra Leone's natural resources can help alter such indicators.

If the Peacebuilding Commission closes shop in 2013, as Mr. Von Schulenburg anticipates, the UN can lay claim to a number of achievements: disarming ex-combatants, supporting the consolidation of democracy and promoting a growing economy. Next year, the World Bank forecasts, the economy will grow by another 8.8 per cent. With the right preparations, the anticipated economic boom may hold more lessons for countries that were once torn apart by civil strife.

Jamaica Observer

Sunday, 13 November 2011

http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/columns/Celebrating-Britain-s-most-influential-blacks_10147013

Celebrating Britain's most influential blacks

Dianne Abbott

LAST week I attended a reception to celebrate the launch of the 2012 Powerlist. This is a list of Britain's most influential black people and is a welcome antidote to the endless negative publicity about people of colour that you see in the British press.

Sadly, it got no publicity in the British press. This follows a pattern where bad publicity about black people and black counties gets acres of coverage, but somehow the media do not want to print the good news. I was also sad to see that whereas, when Labour was in power the prime minister himself would attend the event, this year the Tory-led Government sent a junior minister.

But it is still interesting to note how men and women of Jamaican origin are amongst Britain's most influential. They include a good friend the brilliant musician Shirley Thompson. Shirley studied music at the University of Liverpool. She is the only woman in Europe in the past 37 years to have composed and conducted a symphony. Her epic *New Nation Rising: A 21st Century Symphony* celebrated London's thousand-year history. She is currently working on an opera and dramatic work about Nelson Mandela.

Another name on the list is financial services expert Keith Levy. He originates from Mandeville and has a Master's degree in Physics from Harvard and another Master's degree in Physics and Financial Engineering from the University of Michigan.

Keith is currently head of structured finance (for the Equities Delta One Team) at the international financial services entity Credit Suisse.

Another influential Black British high-flyer is the Reverend Rose Hudson. Rose was born and raised in Jamaica. She is an inspirational religious leader and vicar at All Saints Church in Haggerston and Holy Trinity Church in Dalston. But last year she was also appointed chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons. This means that every day she leads prayers in Parliament before debates begin.

She is not only the first female chaplain, she is also the first black to hold the post. So, if any MPs are inclined to forget that Britain is now a multi-cultural society, they are reminded each day when Rose leads them in prayer.

And another of the most influential black people in Britain is Jamaican-born barrister Courtenay Griffiths, QC. Courtenay specialises in international criminal law and human rights. He has featured in many high-profile legal cases. These include representing the ex-president of Liberia Charles Taylor at the International Court in the Hague.

Taylor was the first African head of state charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity. Courtenay hit the headlines when, as part of this case, he cross-examined top model Naomi Campbell.

Diane Abbott is the British Labour Party's shadow public health minister

Scripps News

Sunday, 13 November 2011

<http://www.scrippsnews.com/node/65384>

Around The World, Justice Is Served To Criminals

Submitted by Arthur I. Cyr

‘Without justice, courage is weak,’ Ben Franklin wrote, and around the world today dangerous men are being brought to justice. Viktor Bout, rightly labeled ‘The Merchant of Death’, has just been convicted by a jury in New York for trying to sell arms to the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) in order to kill Americans.

Bout was seized in Thailand in a sting operation orchestrated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. The Thai government initially vetoed extradition, reflecting strong intervention by Russian interests. The turnabout reflected very intense continuous pressure by the United States government.

Former Soviet army officer Bout became rich and feared dealing in weapons and drugs on a vast scale. The book ‘Merchant of Death’ documents his extraordinary career. Authors Douglas Farah and Stephen Braun provide details regarding a global trail marked in blood. Wholesale death literally was his occupation. Bout’s arrest in a luxury hotel was a victory for basic morality and decency as well as law enforcement.

The FARC controls extensive territory in Colombia. Bout’s fleet of private aircraft allegedly flew in guns and ammunition, and ferried out drugs for sale. The arms reportedly originated in Kazakhstan and other parts of Central Asia. The Merchant is also accused of dealing with al-Qaida and the Taliban, though he has denied these charges.

Initially based in Russia, Bout moved his operations to Belgium, then the United Arab Emirates. For years, he kept just barely ahead of a comprehensive worldwide law-enforcement effort to take him down. His conviction indicates the global rule of law is growing.

While Bout faced justice, the extremely lengthy, complex war crimes trial at The Hague of former Liberia dictator Charles Taylor continues. The final judicial verdict is pending, and probably remains some months away, but the effective employment of due process has broad positive implications for Africa.

In July, Goran Hadži? was arrested in Serbia. He was the last remaining accused Balkans war criminal not yet taken into custody following the brutal fighting of the 1990s in that region.

United Nations officials joined with representatives of the international judicial tribunal overseeing these trials in welcoming this benchmark event, representing symbolic closure to this armed conflict, along with confirmation of the rule of law in an historically troubled, unstable region of the world.

If this brief brutal list indicates such practices are removed from the United States, think again. Edwin P. Wilson, a retired U.S. intelligence pro, went to work for terrorist state Libya in the 1970s. Wilson recruited expert military veterans, including U.S. Army Green Berets, for Col. Qaddafi’s regime. Killings in Colorado as well as Germany were blamed on Wilson’s very lethal crew. Alleged deals, backed by substantial evidence, included shipping twenty tons of C-4 plastic explosives to Libya in chartered planes. Wilson became a U.S. law enforcement priority. Libya refused to extradite him but imaginative American operatives set up an attractive bogus deal and lured him to the Caribbean, where he was arrested.

Wilson spent almost three decades in prison, but then was released. A federal judge declared the CIA and Department of Justice had acted improperly regarding the trial, and overturned his conviction on procedural though not substantive grounds.

By definition, the rule of law puts the same obligations on all parties, innocent and guilty. Franklin and fellow Founders understood that goal is great but the process often painful.

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Women leaders really make a difference

When the African Union declared that 2010-2020 is the African Women Decade, many people may not have taken it seriously. But the rise of women in various fields in Africa, one year into the decade, has been impressive.

Joice Mujuru Joice Mujuru

The AU declaration could actually be an understatement, as indications are that women in leadership are scaling unprecedented heights and could be the much-awaited answer to most of the continent's challenges.

Two African women scooped the Nobel Peace Prize for their "non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work," and shared the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize.

The Liberian leader, the only female Head of State in Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her country-woman, Leymah Gbowee, a peace activist who was a key figure in organizing the movement to bring an end to the Second Liberian Civil War, have done the women folk proud by winning the prestigious award.

Another woman, Tawakul Karmans, a Yemeni journalist and human rights activist, who is one of the loudest voices in the Yemeni protests and a major figurehead of the on-going Arab Spring opposition, is one of the youngest people to receive the prize.

Many will agree that this year's winners are most worthy because the three women have fought tirelessly for peace and women's human rights in a non-violent manner - unlike the former male award winners.

Sirleaf is honoured for the development she has accomplished after Liberia's devastating 14-year civil war, **led by Charles Taylor who is now facing human rights abuses at the Hague.**

Leymah Gbowee started a peace movement by organizing women to pray for peace.

In 2004 the late Professor Wangari Maathai of Kenya, became the first African woman to win the peace prize.

Maathai was renowned as a fearless social environmental activist who led a peaceful women's movement in Kenya defying years of violent resistance by the then Kenyan government.

Nobel Peace Prizes may come and go, but the courage of these women will remain a source of inspiration for many. Whilst the numbers of women winners may be numerically small, and there are many women in the continent whose achievements are not internationally recognized, the awards have transformed women's mindsets and the resulting inspiration is likely to reach very far.

Recently Zimbabwe's first female Vice President, Joice Mujuru, was ranked the fifth most influential woman in Africa by Forbes Africa magazine.

Sirleaf topped the 20 most influential women in Africa followed by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria's Minister of finance.

The third most powerful woman was Joyce Banda, who was appointed Vice President of Malawi in May 2009, becoming the country's first female Vice President.

The magazine named Gill Marcus, Governor of the Reserve Bank of South Africa as the fourth most powerful woman in Africa.

Isabel Dos Santos, the daughter of Angola's president, is number seven and Nelson Mandela's wife Graca Machel is ranked number 15.

Zimbabwe's Vice President Joice Mujuru and Deputy Prime Minister Thokozani Khupe are an inspiration to many Zimbabwean women who may wish to take up political decision-making positions.

However, the rise of women into decision-making and leadership positions should not be restricted to the 2010-2020 decade target alone. Women leaders should be given a chance to flourish and be the world's alternative strategy for peace and sustainable development.

The existing gender gaps in decision making, access and control over economic resources will require more than just a decade of 'redress' policies and practice. Whilst women's achievements in the coming decade should be celebrated, future decades present opportunities for women's total empowerment, gender equity and a world of difference to every woman.