

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



National Stadium, Brookfields, Freetown

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Monday, 14 October 2013

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

Local News

To Leave The Hague – Taylor Given 72hr Ultimatum / <i>The Owl</i>	Page 3
£2M to Keep Taylor in British Jail / <i>Exclusive</i>	Page 4
Britain Confirms Hosting Charles Taylor as Prisoner / <i>Independent Observer</i>	Page 5
Global Witness Excited by Taylor Serving War Crimes Sentence in UK / <i>Concord Times</i>	Page 6
The Perceived Story of Witch-Hunting by the ICC / <i>The Future</i>	Page 7
International Criminal Court - African Union / <i>Concord Times</i>	Page 8
RUF Asks for Subvention From Parliament / <i>New Storm</i>	Page 9

International News

Taylor Moves to UK Jail / <i>New Democrat</i>	Page 10
Liberia's Charles Taylor Prefers Rwandan Jail to UK / <i>BBC</i>	Pages 11-12
Taylor Left In The Cold / <i>The New Dawn</i>	Page 13
Blood Diamonds President Charles Taylor to be Jailed in Britain / <i>Standard Media</i>	Page 14
Charles Taylor to Serve War Crimes Sentence in UK / <i>Nigerian Tribune</i>	Pages 15-16
War Criminal Charles Taylor to Serve 50 Year Sentence in BRITISH Prison / <i>Express</i>	Pages 17-18
Liberian warlord Charles Taylor to Serve 50-year Sentence in British Jail / <i>ABC</i>	Pages 19-20
Ex-President to Move to UK Jail / <i>Ashbourne News Telegraph</i>	Page 21
Blood Diamonds President Charles Taylor to be Jailed in Britain / <i>Metro News</i>	Pages 22-23
African Union Urges ICC to defer Uhuru Kenyatta case / <i>BBC</i>	Pages 24-25
African Leaders Seek Shield from International Courts / <i>Globe and Mail</i>	Pages 26-27
Ambassador Bangali Addresses African Union's Executive Council / <i>GOSL</i>	Pages 28-29
AU vs. ICC: Prying Anarchy from the Jaws of Justice / <i>Liberian Observer</i>	Pages 30-31
Zimbabwe Backs Calls for ICC Boycott / <i>GlobalPost</i>	Page 32
Experts Mull Plans for Syrian War Crimes Tribunal / <i>Agence France-Presse</i>	Pages 33-35
Weighing Shortcomings of Death Penalty / <i>New Democrat</i>	Pages 36-37

To Leave the Hague - Taylor Given 72hr - Ultimatum

Authorities at the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone has given ex-President Charles Taylor 72 hours to be transferred to a British prison, exactly two weeks after judges of the Court Appeal's Chamber upheld the 50 years sentence imposed by the Trial Chamber.

A request by Taylor's defense lawyers that he rather be transferred to Rwanda, where many of the Special Court convicts are serving their prison terms was said to have been turned down by the registrar on Thursday after the decision was reached to send Taylor to the UK.

A Special Court source told this paper Thursday that a similar request was made by Norway for Taylor to serve his sentence in that country but same was denied by the registrar, who indicated that only the judges of the court could grant such request.

This paper further learnt on Thursday evening that Special Court Judges were expected to issue a statement relative to the Taylor transfer last night.

The African Union or AU which is expected to meet in Uganda probably next week to discuss Africans participation at the International Criminal Court or ICC is yet to respond to a letter written by the Taylor family requesting that it plays an influential role in ensuring that Mr. Taylor serves his prison terms on African soil.

A spokesman for the Taylor family last night expressed disappointment in the AU for turning a blind eye on the Taylor prison destination row and its refusal to reply their letter.

Mr. Arthur Saye said the family fear for Taylor's safety in a UK prison is based on the fact that there is a large Sierra Leonean community in London and also the role played by Britain in the Sierra Leonean



conflict. He said Taylor's children who numbered 10 would find it very difficult to visit him in UK but would be easier if it were in say Rwanda.

Call upon the AU Ambassador to Liberia last night to verify claims by the Taylor family concerning a written request for the AU's intervention was unsuccessful as Amb. Tony Solajah MTN mobile rang endlessly. The Special Court Appeals Chamber on September 26, 2013 unanimously upheld the conviction of Mr. Taylor on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and affirmed the 50-year sentence imposed by the Trial Chamber. The Court ordered at the time that Mr. Taylor's sentence be enforced immediately, and that he will remain in the custody of the Special Court pending finalization of arrangements to serve his sentence.

Great Britain had remained the destination where Mr. Taylor could serve his sentence, but Rwanda was a second destination being considered as well. Under Rule 103(B) of the Court's Rules, Mr. Taylor's place of imprisonment is determined by the Special Court President. Mr. Taylor is said to have spent 8 years in detention during his trial. If 8 years are subtracted from his 50 years sentence, this means that Mr. Taylor will be doing 42-years in a UK jail.

Exclusive

Monday, 14 October 2013

£2M To Keep Taylor In British Jail

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor will serve his 50-year sentence for crimes British taxpayers will stump up £80,000 a year to jail a bloodthirsty warlord for the upkeep of Charles Ghangay Taylor, the 65-year old ex-Liberian rebel warlord. Described as once one of Africa's most vicious tyrants, he is the first ex-head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since the Second World War. Britain has been landed with a bill that could top £2million after it was agreed Charles Taylor will serve his 50-year term for war crimes in the UK.

After seizing power in Liberia in 1990, he backed rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone in return for so-called blood diamonds. His forces killed, abducted, raped and mutilated civilians. Children would see their families murdered then be trained as killers.

Taylor's 2012 conviction for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the United Nations backed court was greeted with delight. Confirming his sentence will be served in the UK, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright yesterday told Parliament: "It clearly demonstrates those who commit

atrocities will be held to account."

Finland, Sweden or Rwanda had also offered to enforce his sentence. Natalie Ashworth, of campaign group Global Witness, said: "The UK should be proud to play this part. Seeing him jailed will help Sierra Leone and Liberia turn the page on the past."

Parliament passed a law in 2007 to allow him to be jailed here. Other war criminals caged in the UK include four men from Yugoslavia's civil war. Charles Taylor came to power in Liberia after a bloody seven-year civil war.

He went on to win 75% of the vote in a rigged election in 1997 with his supporters reportedly chanting: "He killed my ma, he killed my pa, I'll vote for him."

The flamboyant warlord started working with brutal rebel groups in Sierra Leone, supplying weapons in return for "blood diamonds" mined by slave labourers. Up to 50,000 died before UK forces intervened.

Taylor was forced to flee but was captured on the Nigeria-Cameroon border in 2006 with sacks full of cash by a team working for the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Independent Observer
Monday, 14 October 2013

Britain confirms hosting Charles Taylor as prisoner

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor is to serve his 50-year war crimes sentence in the UK, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright has confirmed.

Finland, Rwanda and Sweden were other possibilities following the rejection of his appeal last month by a UN-backed special court in The Hague.

It ruled that his convictions had been proved beyond doubt.

He was sentenced in May 2012 for aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war.

Because of fears his trial could spark renewed conflict in West Africa, it was moved from Sierra Leone to The Hague, and the UK at the time offered to jail him if convicted.

'LANDMARK MOMENT'

Mr Wright made the announcement in a written statement to Parliament, saying it followed a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL).

"Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve that sentence," he said, adding that international justice was central to British foreign policy.

"The United Kingdom's offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former President Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes," Mr Wright said.

The SCSL found Taylor, 65, guilty of 11 crimes including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 conflict in which some 50,000 people died.

He was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for a constant flow of so-called blood diamonds.

The rebels were notorious for hacking off the limbs of civilians to terrorise the population.

Taylor has always insisted he is innocent and his only contact with the rebels was to urge them to stop fighting.

He is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II.

UK forces intervened in Sierra Leone in 2000, sending 800 paratroopers to protect Freetown as rebel forces were closing in on the capital. They evacuated British citizens and helped secure the airport for beleaguered UN peacekeepers.

The British forces pushed back the rebels, allowing the UN peacekeeping force to operate effectively. British forces then stayed on for another two years to re-train the Sierra Leone army.

An act of parliament was passed in 2007 to allow for Taylor to serve his sentence in the UK at the cost of the government.

"The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice," Mr Wright said.

"It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity."

It is not the first time the UK has imprisoned foreign nationals convicted of war crimes.

Four men convicted of war crimes in the former Yugo-

slavia served time in British high-security prisons. One former Bosnian-Serb general was stabbed at Wakefield prison in apparent retaliation for the massacre of Muslims in the UN safe haven of Srebrenica in 1995.

The UK also offered to jail the former President of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, had he been convicted at his trial in The Hague on charges of war crimes and genocide. But he died in 2006 while on trial.

BELMARSH PRISON



Global Witness excited by Taylor serving war crimes sentence in UK

The UK should be applauded for helping the international justice system do its job by agreeing to imprison former Liberian President Charles Taylor after his 50 year sentence for war crimes was upheld in The Hague last week, said Global Witness last Thursday.

UK Justice Minister Jeremy Wright confirmed that Taylor will serve his time in the UK, stating that the move was "essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation."

"This is a landmark moment for international justice, and the UK should be proud to play this part. Charles Taylor used funds from diamonds and timber to brutalise the citizens of Sierra Leone and Liberia, and both countries are still struggling to overcome that legacy. Seeing him locked up will help them turn the page on the past, and build towards a peaceful and prosperous future," said Natalie Ashworth, Senior Liberia Campaigner at Global Witness.

In April 2012 the Special Court for Sierra Leone found former warlord Taylor responsible for aiding and abetting crimes including pillage, murder and rape during Sierra Leone's civil war. Taylor appealed

after being sentenced to 50 years' imprisonment in May 2012. The Chamber upheld all of the findings of the trial judgement and the conviction of Taylor for planning, aiding and abetting all 11 counts against him, with the exception of crimes he was accused of planning in Kono district, which the Chamber found were not proven. These exceptions did not affect the final sentence, which was upheld. During the war Taylor trained and armed the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group which became notorious for sexual violence, amputating limbs and recruiting child soldiers. Taylor was elected as president of Liberia in 1997, during a lull in Liberia's own civil wars, and fled into exile in Nigeria in 2003 at the end of the conflict there.

Taylor's use of diamonds and timber to fund the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia, left both countries with a legacy of misusing their rich natural resources. Both have undertaken major reform programmes, but continue to face difficulties in breaking with the corruption and abuse of the past. Liberia, for example, is reeling from the government's illegal sell-off of a quarter of the country for logging permits in 2010-12, and huge new



Charles Taylor being transferred for trial in The Hague

palm oil concessions are now audit assessed 68 natural resource threatening the subsistence deals and found that the government livelihoods of hundreds of rural had awarded the vast majority in communities. A recent independent breach of its own laws.

The Perceived Story of Witch-Hunting by the ICC

By Samuel Bangura

The perceived story has been told in the African continent. It all boils down to the fact that a huge percentage of Africans are perceiving the International Criminal Court (ICC) as an institution formed with the ultimate mandate of muzzling the African powers. They believed that the formation of the ICC was geared towards incapacitating Africans to provide solutions for the continent's problems. The indictments of African leaders only seem to be confirming the perception of many Africans. It has been argued in the continent and across the world that the former president of the United States of America, George Washington Bush should have been tried in The Hague for allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Iraqi war.

The indictment of Sudanese President Umar Al-Bashir, Kenya's President Uru Kenyatta and the Vice President William Ruto, the conviction of former Liberia President Charles Taylor and a host of other top African leaders has been seen as evidence of witch hunting the continent's motivational and freedom fighters. The argument is that the western world wants to continue the exploitation of the continent; thus the desperation to silence all those

who want to take the stance against that exploitation.

However, others perceive the ICC as a beacon of hope in terms of administration of international justice. This school of thought in the continent and the world at large is advocating for all countries in the continent to ratify and sign the ICC protocols as a way of holding those at the helm of affairs in the governments across the continent accountable and for transparency. They are arguing that the ICC is setting the stage for humanitarian attitudes from African leaders for their people. The way most African leaders get their power, is through rigging of elections that causes the eruption of violence and subsequent loss of lives violently.

They are claiming now that the selfish and glutinous politicians from Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda who are pioneering the acts of withdrawal from the ICC might be grimacing their wicked faces right now. These are the people who are calling on the rest of Africa to pull out of the ICC simply because they want to escape justice.

The next article will focus on the outcome of the so-called extra ordinary summit that has just ended in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the 11th and 12th October, 2013.

Concord Times
Monday, 14 October 2013

OPINION

International Criminal Court - African Union

An op-ed from the President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute

Annual session of States Parties to the Statute of the International Criminal Court is a venue for all States Parties

Recently, the International Criminal Court has been in the spotlight of the international stage. This Court is an independent judicial institution that States collectively established by agreeing to its founding document, the Rome Statute, in 1998. The Statute constitutes the legal framework within which the Court works. The Rome Statute system is a major achievement of the whole international community. Hence, the significance of this Court extends far beyond one case, one situation, or one region. All members of the international community should bear this in mind when discussing the current circumstances surrounding the work of the Court.

Currently 122 States have adhered to the Rome Statute; through their accession to the Statute they have voluntarily placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Court. Together, these 122 States are responsible for the Rome Statute system, and together they constitute the Assembly of States Parties, where each one of them is equally represented and enjoys the same rights.

The Assembly carries out essential functions for the overall Rome Statute system and constantly evaluates how to improve and refine it. The Assembly provides a forum to exchange views on issues of concern to States, to consider amendments to the Court's legal framework, to discuss how to enhance the capacity of national judicial mechanisms and assistance to victims, and much more. Indeed, the place of the Court in the overall Rome Statute system is to be the court of last resort,

to get involved only when domestic avenues fail. It is by no mistake that we constantly stress the importance of the whole Rome Statute system and not the Court alone.

As a rule, the Assembly holds one regular session each year. This year is no exception: we will convene in The Hague, The Netherlands, from 20 - 28 November 2013. In light of the challenges that the Court has faced over the past year, many States Parties have expressed to me their wish to engage and constructively address issues of concern with other States Parties.

For these discussions to be truly comprehensive, it is essential for all States Parties to be represented and ready to engage with one another. I hope that any meetings of the African Union or African States Parties prior to this year's Assembly session will focus on consolidating suggestions and proposals for consideration by all States Parties at the Assembly session. Moreover, representatives of the African Union are also invited to partake during the Assembly, as they have been in the past. I encourage African States to reaffirm their commitment to the fight against impunity by engaging actively with all States Parties.

Ambassador Tiina Intelmann is the President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.



New Storm
Monday, 14 October 2013

RUF ASKS FOR SUBVENTION FROM PARLIAMENT

WHAT'S UP's BUDDY Eldred COLLINS, is once again in the news although for all the wrong reasons. This time, the former RUF propagandist and BUTCHER is calling on PARLIAMENT, to give to his so-called party SUBVENTION "to help capacitate us and make us strong," his words.

Well, one wonders how the RUF can ever be ACCEPTED in this country, where it butchered and maimed tens of thousands, RAPED countless number of WOMEN and forced a quarter of the population to FLEE its bloody REBELLION.

Now, they want money/subvention. But, for what? To re-group and come KILL us all? Anyway, there are other ways the RUF can source out funds. Check this out...

1. GEN. IBRAHIM BA: The maverick Senegalese gun-runner and war CRIMINAL helped you in your blood DIAMOND trade, during the war. Go ask him for your MONEY. We understand he gave lots of money, to that COLLINS crook, last time he was here [before smuggled out/"deported" by Orwai Orsai]. Better you RUF foot-soldiers go ask Collins, for your own share

2. CHARLES TAYLOR: The whereabouts of his enormous wealth is still unknown. And, this is WEALTH he made from you MUNKU RUF idiots, by supplying you arms and ammo, in exchange for DIAMONDS. Go ask him

3. TRUST FUND: Thought the Lome Peace Accord made provision for a TRUST Fund, for the RUF to transform into a political PARTY. Whatever happened to that fund? UNA FAINT

LATE

4. PREZO KOROMS: Yes, the Pa gave you money fitti fatta, during the 2012 elections, when you FAKED him that you'll transfer your votes to him [who voted for you anyway?] should there be a run-off; we know that. Where is the money? Go ask COLLINS...And finally...

5. FATOU SANKOH: Like self-styled Gen. Ba, FATOU is Senegalese. Difference is: she was a successful LAWYER in New Jersey [US], but abandoned her lucrative practice, came to Salone and married the Monster SANKS....obviously for diamonds, as Bra Sanks had been made, by Pa Kabba's HOPELESS SLPP, Equivalent to Vice President and Head of the country's strategic MINERALS. Fatou Mbaye [Her real name] helped the RUF



SANKS: Your Boys are desperate

smuggle lots of DIAMONDS out of Salone. Why not cry your PROBLEM to her?

New Democrat (Liberia)

Friday, 11 October 2013

Taylor Moves to UK Jail



Former Liberian president Charles Taylor is to be transferred to a British prison to serve his 50-year sentence for crimes against humanity.

Taylor became the first former head of state to be convicted by an international war crimes court since the Second World War when he was found guilty last year of 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers. In a written statement to Parliament, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright said that following a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), former president Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve his sentence. Mr Wright said: "International justice is central to foreign policy. "It is essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation.

"The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice. It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity."

Taylor, 65, aided rebels in Sierra Leone during a brutal civil war in the 1990s which left 50,000 people dead. Thousands more were left mutilated in the conflict that became known for the extreme cruelty of rival rebel groups who hacked off the limbs of their victims and carved their initials into opponents. Taylor helped to plan attacks in return for "blood diamonds" mined by slave labourers in Sierra Leone and political influence in the volatile West African region. He was convicted not only of aiding and abetting Sierra Leone rebels from Liberia, but also for actually planning some of the attacks carried out by Sierra Leone rebel groups, the Revolutionary United Front and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. It is not the first time Britain has hosted foreign war criminals - four men convicted of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia served time in British jails. The men spent time in high-security prisons, with one former Bosnian-Serb general stabbed at Wakefield prison, apparently in retaliation for the massacre of Muslims in the UN safe haven of Srebrenica in 1995.

BBC

Monday, 14 October 2013

Liberia's Charles Taylor prefers Rwandan jail to UK



Charles Taylor is the first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes since World War II

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor has asked to serve his 50-year sentence for war crimes in Rwanda, rather than the UK.

In a letter sent to the court that convicted him, he says it would be easier - and less expensive - for his family to visit him in Africa.

He also said he feared being attacked in a British prison.

Taylor was convicted of aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war.

Continue reading the main story

“Start Quote

Last week, a UK minister confirmed that Taylor would be transferred to a British prison.

He was convicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), but his trial was held in The Hague in case it sparked renewed unrest in West Africa.

The Netherlands only agreed to host the trial if he was imprisoned elsewhere.

'Own brand of justice'

In a letter seen by the BBC, Taylor wrote:

"My position is that serving my sentence in Rwanda, in my home continent of Africa, would be substantially more humane not only on my own account, but also on account of the impact on my family."

He noted that the court's statutes said access for prisoners' relatives should be taken into account when deciding where they should serve their sentence.

He said that it would be cheaper and easier to travel to Rwanda - and that Liberian nationals could obtain visas at the airport, unlike in the UK.

Taylor, 65, was convicted on 11 crimes including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 conflict, in which some 50,000 people died.

He was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for so-called blood diamonds.

The rebels were notorious for hacking off the limbs of civilians to terrorise the population.

Taylor has always insisted he is innocent and his only contact with the rebels was to urge them to stop fighting.

He is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II.

In his three-page letter, dated 10 October, Taylor continued: "My name is now associated with horrendous atrocities. Prison inmates, whether from the region or not, are likely to be inclined to inflict their own brand of justice by attacking me."

He pointed out that "a significant number of individuals from Sierra Leonean background are in detention in prisons in the UK" and noted that in 2011, Bosnian war criminal Radislav Krstic was attacked in a British jail by three Muslim men, apparently in revenge for his role in the Bosnian conflict.

Taylor argued that the UK authorities "may also simply be unaware of the groups that might be particularly motivated to attack me in prison".

"In short, incarceration in the United Kingdom will likely - and very soon - lead to me being seriously injured or killed."

Some other people convicted by the SCSL are already serving their sentences in Rwanda.

Last week, UK Justice Minister Jeremy Wright noted that the British offer to host Taylor had enabled his trial to proceed in The Hague.

He told parliament: "The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice."

"It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity."

Taylor's appeal against his conviction was rejected last month and he remains in The Hague, awaiting transfer.

The New Dawn (Liberia)

Monday, 14 October 2013

Taylor Left In The Cold

A spokesman for the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone has denied widely spread report that war crime convict ex-President Charles Taylor has been given 72 hours to be transferred to a UK prison, adding that Taylor has not been informed as to when his transfer will take effect.

Sierra Leone Special Court Spokesman, Peter Andersen in response to a story in this paper's Friday's edition on the Taylor transfer to the UK said the order that his (Taylor) sentence be enforced was made on October 4 and that the confidentiality was lifted on October 10.

"As you see, the decision to send Mr. Taylor to the UK was therefore not made on Thursday," Andersen said.

Family members of jailed ex-President Taylor had argued that Taylor be jailed on an African soil, preferably Rwanda, which they say would be less expensive for family visits as compared to the UK. (See Tuesday's edition for Taylor's letter to the court in which he expresses fear for his life in a UK Prison.) "The Special Court can only send prisoners to countries with which we have enforcement agreements. We have no such agreement with Rwanda in respect of Mr. Taylor, and we have no enforcement agreement at all with Norway," Andersen said.

He said the Special Court is a separate institution from the ICC and the AU. The Judges of the Special Court, on being sworn in, take an oath not to be influenced by any states or other entities, he added. Andersen argues that the concerns being raised by the Taylor family is a non issue in that such concerns are considered in the court's Statute, Rules and Practice Direction, including the family situation of Mr. Taylor; and the conditions of imprisonment in the States concerned, including measures to ensure Mr. Taylor's physical safety, the availability of vocational and educational programs, the availability of religious accommodations and the availability of medical services;

He said suggestions that the Judges could decide Taylor's sentence destination is wrong and that under the Rules, the President designates an enforcement state and the Registrar implements the order of the Court. "Rwanda was a second destination being considered as well" may reflect certain inaccurate media report such as BBC Online. As stated above, we have no enforcement agreement with Rwanda in respect of Mr. Taylor" Andersen added. Read Taylor's Letter to the Court on why he does not want to stay in a UK prison.

Standard Media (Kenya)

Sunday, 13 October 2013

Blood diamonds president Charles Taylor to be jailed in Britain



Liberia's ex-president and warlord Charles Taylor is to serve his 50-year prison sentence for war crimes in Britain (Picture: AFP / Getty)

A former Liberian president who sold blood diamonds to fund attacks of appalling barbarity in Sierra Leone is to serve his 50-year prison term in Britain.

Charles Taylor – who has lost an appeal against his conviction for terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers – will be transferred from Holland.

Sierra Leone, which sent the 65-year-old to the international court at The Hague in case a domestic trial prompted a new uprising, has requested that he be imprisoned here. Justice minister Jeremy Wright said the government was happy to help because Taylor's conviction was a 'landmark moment for international justice'.

He told parliament: 'It demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity.'

Campaigners said Britain should be proud of helping to stop Taylor, who aided rebels notorious for cutting off limbs during the 1991-2002 civil war.

'He used funds from diamonds and timber to brutalise the citizens of Sierra Leone and Liberia,' said Global Witness's Natalie Ashworth. 'Both countries still struggle with that legacy.'

Adapted from The Metro

Nigerian Tribune
Friday, 11 October 2013

Charles Taylor to serve war crimes sentence in UK

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor is to serve his 50-year war crimes sentence in the United Kingdom, Justice Minister, Jeremy Wright has confirmed.

Finland, Rwanda and Sweden were other possibilities following the rejection of his appeal last month by a UN-backed special court in The Hague.

It ruled that his convictions had been proved beyond doubt.

He was sentenced in May 2012 for aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war.

Because of fears his trial could spark renewed conflict in West Africa, it was moved from Sierra Leone to The Hague, and the UK at the time offered to jail him if convicted.

Mr Wright made the announcement in a written statement to Parliament, saying it followed a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL).

“Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve that sentence,” he said, adding that international justice was central to British foreign policy.

“The United Kingdom’s offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former President Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes,” Mr Wright said.

The SCSL found Taylor, 65, guilty of 11 crimes including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 conflict in which some 50,000 people died.

He was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for a constant flow of so-called blood diamonds.

The rebels were notorious for hacking off the limbs of civilians to terrorise the population.

Taylor has always insisted he is innocent and his only contact with the rebels was to urge them to stop fighting.

He is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II.

UK forces intervened in Sierra Leone in 2000, sending 800 paratroopers to protect Freetown as rebel forces were closing in on the capital. They evacuated British citizens and helped secure the airport for beleaguered UN peacekeepers.

The British forces pushed back the rebels, allowing the UN peacekeeping force to operate effectively. British forces then stayed on for another two years to re-train the Sierra Leone army.

An act of parliament was passed in 2007 to allow for Taylor to serve his sentence in the UK at the cost of the government.

“The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice,” Mr Wright said.

“It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity.”

It is not the first time the UK has imprisoned foreign nationals convicted of war crimes.

Four men convicted of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia served time in British high-security prisons. One former Bosnian-Serb general was stabbed at Wakefield prison in apparent retaliation for the massacre of Muslims in the UN safe haven of Srebrenica in 1995.

The UK also offered to jail the former President of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, had he been convicted at his trial in The Hague on charges of war crimes and genocide. But he died in 2006 while on trial.

Express

Friday, 11 October 2013

War criminal Charles Taylor to serve 50 year sentence in BRITISH prison

CHARLES Taylor, the brutal former dictator of Liberia, is to be transported to a British prison to serve his 50-year sentence for crimes against humanity.

By: Benjamin Russell



Ex-president Taylor, 65, became the first former head of state to be convicted by an international war crimes court since the Second World War when he was found guilty last year.

It has now been announced he will be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve his sentence.

Rwanda and Sweden had also offered to take him following the rejection of his appeal last month by a UN-backed special court in The Hague

It is expected he will be sent initially to Belmarsh prison in south-east London, which has a designated high-security unit for terrorists.

In a written statement to Parliament, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright said that following a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), former president Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve his sentence.

Mr Wright said: "International justice is central to foreign policy.

"It is essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation.

"The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice.

"It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity."

The average annual cost of keeping a prisoner in Britain is estimated to be more than £40,000 a year, meaning if 65-year-old Taylor was to spend the next 20 years behind bars it could cost the British taxpayer almost £1million.

The dictator was convicted of 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers.

During his trial it came to light that Taylor had given British supermodel Naomi Campbell 'blood diamonds' as a gift after they attended a charity dinner together.

Taylor aided rebels in Sierra Leone during a brutal civil war in the 1990s which left 50,000 people dead.

Thousands more were left mutilated in the conflict that became known for the extreme cruelty of rival rebel groups who hacked off the limbs of their victims and carved their initials into opponents.

Taylor helped to plan attacks in return for "blood diamonds" mined by slave labourers in Sierra Leone and political influence in the volatile West African region.

He was convicted not only of aiding and abetting Sierra Leone rebels from Liberia, but also for actually planning some of the attacks carried out by Sierra Leone rebel groups, the Revolutionary United Front and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

It is not the first time Britain has hosted foreign war criminals - four men convicted of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia served time in British jails.

The men spent time in high-security prisons, with one former Bosnian-Serb general stabbed at Wakefield prison, apparently in retaliation for the massacre of Muslims in the UN safe haven of Srebrenica in 1995.

The former president of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, would have stayed in a British jail but died in 2006 while he was on trial in the Hague.

ABC (Australia)

Friday, 11 October 2013

Liberian warlord Charles Taylor to serve 50-year sentence in British jail

By Barbara Miller and wires

The UK government has confirmed former Liberian president Charles Taylor will serve his 50-year sentence for war crimes in a British prison.

Taylor, 65, was found guilty in 2012 of aiding and abetting war crimes during the civil war in Sierra Leone in the 1990s.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, which sat in The Hague, found him responsible for atrocities including murder, slavery and rape.

As part of a deal to bring him to justice, the British government had offered to jail him in Britain if he was found guilty and sentenced.



Britain will also bear the costs of accommodating him.

UK justice minister Jeremy Wright described Taylor's conviction as a landmark moment for international justice.

"It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity," he said.

But the justice ministry refused to disclose which jail would house the former strongman. Taylor is currently being held at the UN's detention unit in The Hague.

His landmark sentence - on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity - was the first handed down by an international court against a former head of state since the Nazi trials at Nuremberg in 1946.

He had been arrested in 2006 and sentenced at The Hague last year for "some of the most heinous crimes in human history".

Taylor 'would prefer jail in Rwanda than in Britain'

As Liberia's president from 1997 to 2003, Taylor supplied guns and ammunition to rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone in a conflict notorious for its mutilations, drugged child soldiers, and sex slaves, judges said.

He had maintained his innocence throughout the seven-year case, in a trial which heard evidence from witnesses including actress Mia Farrow and supermodel Naomi Campbell.

They told of a gift of diamonds believed to have been given by Taylor in 1997.

Taylor's lawyer Morris Anyah had suggested after his final appeal was rejected last month, that the former west African strongman would prefer to go to Rwanda to be closer to his family.

His British imprisonment "will leave Charles Taylor more isolated from his family, friends and broader support structures than would have been the case had he been ordered to serve out his sentence in Rwanda," Mr Anyah said.

"So it is yet another disappointment in a case with a long line of them for the defence," he said via email.

ABC/AFP

Ashbourne News Telegraph

Friday, 11 October 2013

Ex-president to move to UK jail

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor is to be transferred to a British prison to serve his 50-year sentence for crimes against humanity.

Taylor became the first former head of state to be convicted by an international war crimes court since the Second World War when he was found guilty last year of 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers.

In a written statement to Parliament, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright said that following a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), former president Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve his sentence.

Mr Wright said: "International justice is central to foreign policy.

"It is essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation.

"The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice. It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity."

Taylor, 65, aided rebels in Sierra Leone during a brutal civil war in the 1990s which left 50,000 people dead.

Thousands more were left mutilated in the conflict that became known for the extreme cruelty of rival rebel groups who hacked off the limbs of their victims and carved their initials into opponents.

Taylor helped to plan attacks in return for "blood diamonds" mined by slave labourers in Sierra Leone and political influence in the volatile West African region.

He was convicted not only of aiding and abetting Sierra Leone rebels from Liberia, but also for actually planning some of the attacks carried out by Sierra Leone rebel groups, the Revolutionary United Front and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

It is not the first time Britain has hosted foreign war criminals - four men convicted of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia served time in British jails.

The men spent time in high-security prisons, with one former Bosnian-Serb general stabbed at Wakefield prison, apparently in retaliation for the massacre of Muslims in the UN safe haven of Srebrenica in 1995.

The former president of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, would have stayed in a British jail but died in 2006 while he was on trial in the Hague.

Metro News (UK)

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Blood diamonds president Charles Taylor to be jailed in Britain



A former Liberian president who sold blood diamonds to fund attacks of appalling barbarity in Sierra Leone is to serve his 50-year prison term in Britain.

Charles Taylor – who has lost an appeal against his conviction for terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers – will be transferred from Holland.

Sierra Leone, which sent the 65-year-old to the international court at The Hague in case a domestic trial prompted a new uprising, has requested that he be imprisoned here.

Justice minister Jeremy Wright said the government was happy to help because Taylor's conviction was a 'landmark moment for international justice'.

He told parliament: 'It demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity.'

Campaigners said Britain should be proud of helping to stop Taylor, who aided rebels notorious for cutting off limbs during the 1991-2002 civil war.

'He used funds from diamonds and timber to brutalise the citizens of Sierra Leone and Liberia,' said Global Witness's Natalie Ashworth. 'Both countries still struggle with that legacy.'

BBC

Saturday, 12 October 2013

African Union urges ICC to defer Uhuru Kenyatta case



African states want the ICC to withdraw the case against the Kenyan president

The African Union summit in Ethiopia has demanded a deferral of The Hague trial of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, due to start in November.

It also agreed a resolution stating no sitting African head of state should appear before an international court.

With both Kenyan and Sudanese presidents facing ICC cases, African leaders have long complained that the court unfairly targets them.

The AU had discussed withdrawing from the ICC, but failed to get support.

Senior figures including Kofi Annan have criticised plans to quit the ICC.

ICC deferral

The AU leaders, meeting in Addis Ababa, agreed to back immunity for any sitting African head of state.

They also asked Kenya to write to the UN Security Council seeking a deferral in the International Criminal Court (ICC) case against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, who faces charges of crimes against humanity.

Both he and his deputy, William Ruto, deny charges of organising violence after the 2007 election.

While Mr Ruto went on trial in September, President Kenyatta has repeatedly requested his trial - due next month - be postponed.

Addressing the summit, Mr Kenyatta accused the court of bias and "race-hunting", AFP reports.

"The ICC has been reduced into a painfully farcical pantomime, a travesty that adds insult to the injury of victims. It stopped being the home of justice the day it became the toy of declining imperial powers."

Ethiopian Prime Minister and AU chairman Hailemariam Dessalegn said the summit was not a crusade against the ICC but a call for the court to address Africa's concerns seriously.

He said the ICC's cases against the Sudanese and Kenyan presidents could hamper peace and reconciliation efforts in their countries.

"The unfair treatment that we have been subjected to by the ICC is completely unacceptable," he said.

The ICC issued a warrant in 2009 for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir over alleged war crimes in the Darfur region, but he has not yet been arrested.

The ICC relies on the authorities of national governments to hand over suspects, but Mr Bashir has avoided arrest despite travelling to countries that have signed up to the ICC statute.

Ethiopian Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who is the current chairman of the AU's Executive Council, said the ICC had failed to respond to the African Union's previous complaints.

"What the summit decided is that President Kenyatta should not appear until the request we have made is actually answered," he said.

Thirty-four of the AU's 54 members have signed up to the ICC.

Kenya's parliament has already passed a motion for the country to withdraw.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said that withdrawing from the court would be a "badge of shame".

Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu has also voiced his support for the ICC.

"Those leaders seeking to skirt the court are effectively looking for a license to kill, maim and oppress their own people without consequence," he wrote in an article carried by several newspapers.

"They simply vilify the institution as racist and unjust, as Hermann Goering and his fellow Nazi defendants vilified the Nuremberg tribunals following World War II."

All eight of the cases currently open at the ICC are in Africa but it is also investigating possible cases elsewhere.

Globe and Mail (Canada)

Sunday, 13 October 2013

African leaders seek shield from international courts

GEOFFREY YORK, JOHANNESBURG

African political leaders are demanding immunity from international prosecution for as long as they remain in office, a demand that has sparked outrage and ridicule from human-rights groups.

At an emergency summit on the weekend, the African Union said the International Criminal Court should not prosecute African leaders while they hold office. This would provide a legal shield to the presidents of Kenya and Sudan, who face charges of crimes against humanity for their alleged roles in orchestrating mass murders in their own countries.

The demand is a sign of the growing African backlash against the international court, which has only prosecuted Africans so far in its 11-year history. African governments could collapse if their leaders were forced to travel to The Hague for trials, and Kenya could “slide into violence,” African Union officials said at their summit.

But rights activists swiftly condemned the proposal. “The notion that sitting heads of state should have immunity for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity is not just appallingly self-serving, it’s repugnant,” said a statement by Daniel Bekele, head of the Africa division of Human Rights Watch.

He said the immunity proposal would discourage African leaders from leaving office and would create incentives for unscrupulous leaders “to gain or maintain power at whatever cost – by murder, coup or fraudulent elections.”

Amnesty International said the AU’s proposal “sends the wrong message, that politicians on the African continent will place their political interests above those of victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.”

The debate over the ICC has divided Africa, sparking issues of justice, power, political impunity and traditional resentment of Western domination. As long as Western leaders are never prosecuted by the ICC, the court cannot insist on court appearances by African leaders, many Africans believe.

The Kenyan parliament has already voted to withdraw from the ICC, and several other African governments have supported the idea, although the AU at its weekend summit in Addis Ababa did not formally endorse a withdrawal.

In addition to the immunity demand, the AU also called for a deferral of the trial of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, scheduled to begin in The Hague on Nov. 12. It is now unclear whether Mr. Kenyatta will show up at his trial, despite earlier promises to co-operate. A British newspaper, The Telegraph, reported on Sunday that the United Nations Security Council might agree to a delay in the trial to avoid a damaging showdown between the court and the African Union.

Many Africans have denounced the court as “racist” for failing to file charges against Western leaders or Western allies.

“The ICC has been reduced into a painfully farcical pantomime, a travesty that adds insult to the injury of victims,” Mr. Kenyatta said in a speech to the AU summit. He attacked the ICC for “bias and race-hunting” and accused it of being “the toy of declining imperial powers.”

Ethiopian Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the ICC was a “political instrument” that was “condescending” towards Africa.

But many Africans disagree. Kofi Annan, a Ghanaian who served as UN secretary-general, said an African pullout from the ICC would be a “badge of shame.”

Retired archbishop Desmond Tutu, the famed South African anti-apartheid leader, said those who seek to evade the international court are “effectively looking for a licence to kill, main and oppress their own people without consequence.”

He noted that the ICC charges against African leaders were largely a result of requests by African governments themselves. Africans are heavily represented in the ICC’s decision-making bodies, he said, noting that its chief prosecutor and five of its 18 judges are African.

Government of Sierra Leone

Friday, 11 October 2013

Press Release

**EMBASSY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE**

Addis Ababa

Ethiopia



P. O. Box 5619
Tel. 011-3-71 00 33
Fax: 011-3-71 19 11

Ambassador Bangali addresses African Union's Executive Council

His Excellency Andrew Gbebay Bangali, Sierra Leone's Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on Friday 11th October 2013 said that Sierra Leone has always been supportive of the International Criminal Court (ICC) but that the country is concerned about the court's operations in the recent past.

Ambassador Bangali made this statement at the Fifteenth Extra Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union in Addis Ababa where he represented Hon. Dr. Samura Kamara, the country's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation who was unavoidably absent at the confab due to prior commitments back home.

This year's Extra Ordinary Session of the Executive Council is themed: "Africa's Relationship with the International Criminal Court (ICC)".

Sierra Leone, he said, has signed, ratified and domesticated the Rome Statute.

"To show that we do not endorse impunity and crimes against humanity, we set up the Special Court in the aftermath of our 11 years rebel war to try those who were adjudged to be criminally liable or responsible for the atrocities that were committed during that period. Eight of them are now serving huge prison sentences ranging from 45 to 50 years in Rwanda," he said.

"We believe that the court should listen to its largest shareholder, the 34 African States Parties to the Rome Statute and should not make us feel hounded," he said and further stated that Sierra Leone pledges its unflinching support for the call for action by this august body as very ably presented by the Kenyan Foreign Minister, Hon. Madam Amina Mohamed in requesting a deferral of the trial of President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and his Vice, Mr. William Ruto during their tenure of office.

Ambassador Bangali pointed out that certain Articles of the Rome Statute should be amended or improved upon, citing Articles 27 and 63 in particular.

Earlier the Kenyan Foreign Minister, Hon. Madam Amina Mohamed said with emotion that her country was among the founding members of the ICC thus describing the present meeting as very critical and crucial.

She said they were cooperating with the court but that they had serious reservations with regards to how the ICC was treating President Kenyatta and his Vice.

“Moving out of the instrument is part of the instrument. Our laws are far more better than the Rome Statute. We signed the Rome Statute without any precondition,” she told her peers.

South Africa’s Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Hon. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said that before the end of the meeting the 34 Heads of State in the Continent who are States Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC should jointly sign a letter which will be co-signed by the Chair of the African Union Commission which will be handed to the United Nations Security Council calling for an immediate and unconditional deferral of the Kenyan situation.

She opined that no sitting Head of State should be tried by any court whilst he/she is in office.

The Foreign Minister of Ethiopia and Chairman of the Executive Council, Hon. Dr. Tedros Adhanom said that the ICC continues to ignore with disrespect the repeated calls of the African Union for deferral of the trial of its sitting Heads of State.

In attendance at the meeting were: Mrs. Juliana Fallah, First Secretary who also doubles as Desk Officer of the Committee of 10 Heads of State on the United Nations Security Council Reforms; Mr. Amos Coker, Financial Attaché and Mr. Christopher Bockarie, the outgoing First Secretary in the Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone in Addis Ababa.

Liberian Observer

Saturday, 12 October 2013

Editorial

AU vs. ICC: Prying Anarchy from the Jaws of Justice

Last weekend, the defense counsel for former president **Charles Taylor** put his case to a gathering of South African law professionals, professors and students. It is a case he is attempting to try in the court of public opinion, having twice lost it in a court of law.

Barrister Courtenay Griffiths told the gathering that the International Criminal Court (ICC) is a farce, intended to target only African leaders. Equating the ICC to neocolonialism, his argument was that African nations should be able to try their own high-profile criminal cases internally and independently.

Obviously, this case is weak and crêpe paper thin. Given the insurmountable evidence to the atrocities for which Taylor was responsible, one would have thought that Griffiths defended the former warlord only because every defendant is entitled to representation under international human rights law -- not because Griffiths actually believed in Taylor's course. Unless, of course, having twice lost his case in court, Taylor is trying a different strategy: the race card, disguised as pan-Africanism, hence the crusade to African nations.

The message: You and I are both victims of Western neocolonialism. Why this message? Because the enemy of my worst enemy is my friend, even if we were enemies before.

Obviously, this court is not in fact intended to try the George Bush's of the world. Why not? Because the American democratic system is strong enough to handle its own high profile criminal cases. The decisions of the US high court are respected as final; freedom of speech laws allow people to protest those decisions (peacefully), balancing out the level of passionate debate for or against. Case in point, the Trayvon Martin verdict. Although it revealed serious flaws in the justice system, blacks did not break out their rifles in retaliation.

Obviously, this is absolutely NOT the case in Africa. When a leader loses an election, his loyalists take to the streets and disrupt the public peace. Case in point, Laurent Gbagbo of Ivory Coast. Even in a country as developed as Kenya, civil unrest is always lurking just below the surface. In Africa, tribal loyalties run very deep, as do historical enmities. Every political move is primarily viewed through these prisms, and the enemy of one's worst enemy becomes one's friend. In Taylor's case, having no constituency or tribal affiliation, (in fact being a member of the ruling elite resented by the indigenous majority), his strategy was to manipulate said tribal divisions and hand out money and power very generously while at the same time building a fearsome image by maintaining martial law. Particularly because of his 'generosity,' he bought a lifetime of loyalty among high and low, especially among his fighting forces. Affectionately called 'the Papay,' Taylor is still revered by many in Liberia today.

As such, had he been tried in Liberia, unrest would undoubtedly have broken out in the country once again. The result would have been the same had Gbagbo been tried in Ivory Coast. Where does it end? Some ethnic and religious groups are historically war-faring; but the majority of Africans across the continent are war-weary. They want to move on. More than that, even, seeds of hope are sprouting. African economies are growing fast. Said economic growth will be undermined, however, by the presence of trouble makers on the continent.

Why are we so hard to please, though? When African nations were left to grapple with their own justice deficits, the West was accused of allowing genocide to occur unabated. Remember Rwanda? Obviously, the most sensible thing to do is to move these ethnically and politically charged cases out of their hotspots.

We Africans must not allow ourselves to be manipulated into moving backward. Those touting the neocolonialism view have their own agendas, knowing full well that it hardly holds water, let alone logic. We should not attempt to defend dictators and warlords responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths and human rights atrocities, even in the court of public opinion. In fact, those African leaders running from the ICC, having seen what just happened to Taylor, are making themselves look suspicious. Why run if you have no criminal intent?

We Africans have to be careful how we play that “neocolonialism” card, as it has a tendency to make us look hypocritical, stupid and downright ungrateful.

Do we remember the nefarious Capt. Amadou Sanogo, who March 2012, staged a coup in Mali, overthrowing the democratically elected president? That coup led to total destabilization of the country, giving the Tuareg rebels a grand opportunity to take advantage of the confusion in Bamako. Soon they seized northern Mali and history-rich Timbuktu and immediately started destroying some of its sacred relics. They soon instituted Sharia law. Then, in the collaboration with al-Qaeda, the Tuareg started swiftly moving southward toward Bamako. The Mali government became desperate and ran to their former colonial master, France, begging their intervention. Thanks to France’s financial and military might, the rebel-al-Qaeda advance was halted and Timbuktu and the north retaken. We heard no cry of neocolonialism then. How hypocritical can we get?

We hope the African Union knows what it is doing. ECOMOG troops died here fighting against Charles Taylor’s guerillas. Let their governments not now turn around and say that Taylor was falsely accused. That would be a slap in the faces of the valiant dead.

GlobalPost

Friday, 11 October 2013

Zimbabwe backs calls for ICC boycott

Zimbabwe supports calls for African states to cut ties with the International Criminal Court amid claims that the tribunal targets leaders from the continent, a government official said Friday.

"We are not for it (ICC), we do not agree with the statute," Joey Bimha, Zimbabwe's secretary for foreign affairs, told AFP.

Africa's position on the role of the Hague-based tribunal is expected to be discussed at this weekend's African Union summit in Addis Ababa.

African countries account for 34 of the 122 parties to have ratified the Rome Statute, the court's founding treaty, which took effect on July 1, 2002.

"We did not sign that Roman Statute because we did not agree with some of the provisions," said Bimha.

Some countries in the 54-member bloc have accused the ICC of targeting Africans in its prosecutions, like the high-profile case of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

Two years ago, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe told the UN General Assembly that the ICC was targeting leaders from developing countries for prosecution while turning a "blind eye" to crimes by Western leaders.

He said the court "seems to exist only for alleged offenders of the developing world, the majority of them Africans."

"The leaders of the powerful western states guilty of international crime, like George Bush and Tony Blair, are routinely given the blind eye. Such selective justice has eroded the credibility of the ICC on the African continent," he added.

The ICC recently sentenced former Liberian president Charles Taylor to 50-years in prison after he was found guilty of crime against humanity.

As Liberia's president from 1997 to 2003, Taylor supplied guns and ammunition to rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone in a conflict notorious for its mutilations, drugged child soldiers and sex slaves, judges said.

This week, former UN secretary general Kofi Annan, during his visit to South Africa, dismissed claims that the ICC unfairly targets African leaders.

Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic was the first sitting head of state to be indicted for war crimes.

rm/sk/nb

Agence France-Presse
Monday, 14 October 2013

Experts mull plans for Syrian war crimes tribunal



A Free Syrian army fighter carries his weapon in a damaged building in Jubaila neighbourhood in Deir al zor, eastern Syria October 13, 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON: When the guns fall silent in Syria and the killing eventually stops, a key part of helping a traumatised people rebuild and heal will be bringing to justice those behind years of shocking brutality.

Even though there is no end in sight yet to the grinding war in which some 110,000 people have died, a group of international judges and experts is already working to give the victims a voice through a special court.

“This has never been done before,” said David Crane, who has led the project to draft a 30-page blueprint for a Syrian Extraordinary Tribunal to Prosecute Atrocity Crimes setting out in detail the possible make-up of any eventual court.

Crane, the founding chief prosecutor for the **Special Court for Sierra Leone** – an international war crimes tribunal that convicted Liberian warlord Charles Taylor – gathered a dozen legal experts to draw up a “starting point” for discussions.

“Usually, the international community just sits back and waits and when a political solution is done and the killing stops, everybody scrambles to try figure out what to do,” Crane told AFP.

“I thought ‘Well let’s be ready and have this on the shelf.’”

Working with the Syrian opposition, non-governmental organizations and staff at the University of Syracuse where he is now a professor, Crane’s team has mapped out the atrocities committed in Syria since the war began in March 2011.

The catalog of horror stretches into three volumes and is growing.

Draft indictments have even been prepared against Syrian President Bashar alAssad and his “top 10 henchmen,” Crane said, adding that others have also been drafted for some opposition commanders, as well as foreign fighters.

He did not detail any of the indictments, stressing any charges would be up to the court’s eventual chief prosecutor.

In the initial stages of the war, about 90 percent of the atrocities were being committed by the regime, but now Crane estimates that it’s “about 50-50.”

“First it was a civil war, it was bloody and problematic, but now it’s gotten personal. And it’s gotten bloodier, the longer this thing goes on, the less likely a peaceful transition will happen,” he said.

How any future court will be composed and the role of The Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) is still up for debate.

But Crane insisted the effort was “not an academic exercise.”

“It’s put together by seasoned practitioners who have been working for over 20 years in this business, looking at both not just the law, but also the practicalities, the politics and diplomacy of what it takes to build a domestic court, a regional court or assist the permanent court,” he added.

After two years of work, the draft blueprint says there was a strong feeling that any court “should be domestic, but with international elements,” for example two Syrian judges sitting with an international colleague.

Its purpose “would be to prosecute those most responsible for atrocity crimes committed in Syria by all sides of the conflict when the political situation permits.”

There’s a strong preference for the court to be based inside Syria.

“We found in Sierra Leone that a court that sits right in the scene of the crime is much more effective,” Crane explained.

“At the end of the day, we tend to forget this, these tribunals are about the victims and they have to be seen as such... It has to be right there so the people of Syria can see justice truly being done.”

It could well be that the ICC could be called upon to try Assad – although Syria is not yet a signatory to the court – while lower-level officials may be brought before some kind of domestic or regional tribunal.

One of the thorniest issues will be whether the death penalty is retained. Under ICC rules, there is no capital punishment. And any international court would likely bar it too.

But many Syrians want it kept on the books.

“At the end of the day, which is a very Middle Eastern perspective, they want revenge,” Crane said.

“The concept of an eye for an eye goes back thousands of years.”

Crane has already briefed the ICC on the blueprint and it has been read with interest by officials at the US State Department, which says it wants to support the Syrian people in setting up accountability mechanisms.

“What’s happened in Syria has shocked our moral consciences, whether that’s chemical weapons or whether it’s 100,000 people dead,” a senior State Department official said.

Over the decades, various legal mechanisms have been adopted after conflicts in places like Rwanda, Bosnia and Iraq.

And while many Syrians are deeply committed to justice and reconciliation, the US official said, there are a lot of “varying opinions from Syrians on the inside and the outside.”

“Because there are a lot of manifestations of criminal accountability for Syrians, understanding all of the pros and cons of each of those processes is incredibly important,” the official added.

All agree though that when the time comes, how justice is handed down to those with blood on their hands has to be determined by Syrians – the very people who have suffered the most.

New Democrat (Liberia)

Friday, 11 October 2013

Weighing Shortcomings of Death Penalty

Describing the death penalty as the ultimate, irreversible denial of human rights,

Amnesty International opposes it in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner.

The rights advocate group says it is the premeditated and cold-blooded killing of a human being by the state in the name of justice, and it violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Therefore, Amnesty International urges politicians to stop presenting the death penalty as a quick-fix to reduce high crime rates and instead address problems in the criminal justice system.

By working towards the abolition of the death penalty worldwide, Amnesty International aims to end the cycle of violence created by a system riddled with economic and racial bias and tainted by human error.

Though the global trend towards abolition remained strong, 2012 saw a disappointing resumption of executions in some countries, while the total number of confirmed executions was 682, two more than in 2011.

According statistics by Amnesty International, executions were recorded in 21 countries, the same number as 2011. The number of countries where death sentences were imposed fell from 63 to 58 though 50 countries worldwide actively practice the death penalty.

This dismal trend pushes European leaders not to rest on their oars of abolishing the death penalty on their continent, but to reiterate strong opposition to the practice of capital punishment.

Therefore, on the 11th observance of World Day against the death penalty, the European Union and the Council of Europe resolved to "continue to underline, whenever and wherever possible, the inhumane and cruel nature of this unnecessary punishment and its failure to prevent crime."

Despite encouragement by the growing momentum towards abolition of the death penalty worldwide, they believe the resumption of executions and breaches of decades of moratoria in different parts of the world clearly mark the necessity to pursue their unceasing action against the death penalty in Europe and worldwide.

Based on the fact that no execution has taken place on European for the past 15 years, both executives of the European Union and the Council of Europe share the common overarching objective to consolidate the abolition within and beyond its borders.

A six-member panel of eminent persons including EU Ambassador Attilio Pacifici analyzed the matter here yesterday and observed that capital punishment had mostly negative impact and failed to deter murder since deterrence is the argument of those wanting it retained.

Liberian panelists were agreed that the time is ripe for a research on capital punishment in the country before the 1847 constitution, to culminate in a national debate on the death penalty now that the 1986 constitution is being reviewed for revision. They said a sustained nationwide sensitization of the need to abolish capital punishment should follow that debate.

CENTAL Executive Thomas Nah Doe, who was amongst the discussants, said since his NGO deals with transparency, it has a stake in investigating whether or not corruption occurred during the trials of murder suspects too poor or unwilling to buy justice, thus leading to their guilt.

Introspection for Christians permeated the conference room when he observed: As Christians, upholding the Biblical law 'Thou Shall Not Kill, should also mean 'thou shall not kill the killer.'

We believe the onus is on all political parties, religious leaders and civil society organizations and journalists to actively engage in debating this fundamental human rights issue--capital punishment--enshrined in the 1986 constitution as the right to life that shall not be willfully taken away.

It is worthy to note that Tubman in his 27-year rule signed just one death warrant, and restrained further signings due to the horror he saw at the gallows.

Came his predecessor, William Tolbert, who signed 12 death warrants beginning Nigerian scientist, Dr. Justin M. Obi who taught at Cuttington College. He was convicted for killing Episcopal Bishop Dillard H. Brown and his treasurer.

Menikpala Kpili, who spent 30 years on death sentence, was freed after pulling the trigger to hang Obi.

William Tolbert, later signed the death warrants of four men, including his uncle with the same name, all convicted of killing women.

But signing the death warrant of the Harper Seven including a woman and the Superintendent of Maryland County, who was son of the National Chairman of the ruling True Whig Party, shook the foundation of the power of the ruling elite after the TWP chairman promptly resigned.

After the Supreme Court upheld their guilty verdict here for the ritual killing of folksinger Moses Tweh in Harper the seven convicts were flown to the venue of the crime and hanged.

But all indications assure that President Sirleaf, wanting to nurture democracy would never countenance signing any death warrant.