

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



16th century map of the Guinea Coast identifying Sierra Leone by the Portuguese name Sierra Liona.

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, 15 March 2010

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

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Sierra Leonean

Testifies For Taylor

A Sierra Leonean has taken the witness stand in defence of Charles Taylor, the man who is on trial for allegedly supporting rebels in Sierra Leone. The witness is testifying in open court with partial pro-

tective measures; his name and personal data are not disclosed. He said Former RUF Leader, Foday Sankoh started agitating for multi-party democracy in 1980. To further conceal his identity, the witness is testifying with a hat stretching from

the top of his head to his eyes. According to Defence Lawyer, Terry Munyard the witness wants these protective measures because he is afraid of reprisal when he returns to Sierra Leone.

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Sierra Leonean

Testifies For Taylor

The witness told the court that he and Former RUF Leader, Foday Sankoh were members of an underground movement called the Study Group in 1980. He said the Study Group agitated for change of what he called the profoundly corrupt system which characterized governance in Sierra Leone.

The witness also said he later joined the RUF in

1992, and took up a position of Civilian Coordinator.

The Sierra Leonean Defence Witness direct examination was the shortest the court has ever seen since Mr. Taylor's trial commenced.

Defence Lawyer Terry Munyard questioned the wit-

ness for about three hours and ended the direct examination. Prosecution Lawyer, Nicholas Kumjian started the cross-examination of the witness by asking him about the birth place of the RUF.

The trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor continues in the Hague.

The Spectator

Monday, 15 March 2010

Taylor Did Not Order His Rebels to Commit Crimes...

Charles Taylor never ordered his rebel forces to commit crimes, and he was prevented from liberating the Liberian people by foreign countries who interfered in the country's conflict, a defense witness told the Special Court for Sierra Leone this week.

DCT 125, a protected witness testifying with face and voice distortion on Tuesday told the judges that he never heard of the former Liberian president giving orders to his own rebel forces to kill, rape, loot or burn people's houses, as alleged by prosecutors.

The witness said that if any crimes were committed under Mr. Taylor's rule, they were isolated incidents which could have taken place without Mr. Taylor's knowledge. The witness maintained this position in a direct question and answer session with Mr. Taylor's defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, on Tuesday.

"Were you ever aware of Charles Taylor giving an order to kill?" Mr. Griffiths asked the witness.

"Never," the witness responded.

"To burn people's houses?" Mr. Griffiths went on.

"Never," the witness responded again.

"To rape?" Mr. Griffiths went further.

"Never," again, the witness responded.

"To loot?" Mr. Griffiths asked again.

"Never," the witness said for the fourth time.

The witness added that "maybe if that had happened, it would be an isolated incident without Charles Taylor's knowledge."

The witness explained that he had been a pan-African revolutionary colleague of Mr. Taylor, adding that he personally did not have any specific interest in helping to start a conflict in Liberia. He said that he did not help Mr. Taylor in his invasion of Liberia in 1989, but that together with some other colleagues who were not named in court today, he moved to Liberia to help provide security for the former Liberian president whose NPFL rebel group was split into two when one of Mr. Taylor's former rebel colleagues, Prince Johnson, led his break-away faction from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) at the initial stages of

the Liberian conflict.

On Wednesday, the witness told the court that foreign countries interfered in Mr. Taylor's revolution in Liberia and prevented the former president from liberating his people.

"The Liberian revolution failed because foreign hands interfered in the Liberian revolution to disturb the revolution and prevent His Excellency President Taylor from liberating the country," the witness said as he finished his direct-examination on Wednesday. The witness also told the judges that Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeeping force was not neutral in the Liberian conflict. He said that the peacekeepers were more sympathetic towards the other Liberian warring factions at the expense of Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group.

During cross-examination by prosecutor Nicholas Kounjiani, the witness told the court that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the Sierra Leonean rebel group which Mr. Taylor is accused of providing support for, is not a terrorist organization as alleged by prosecutors. Presiding Judge of the Trial Chamber, Justice Julia Sebutinde, asked the witness to give his definition of terrorist organization. "It is an organization that is bent on the destruction of life and property without any meaning and purpose, to disturb the peace within the human being," the witness said.

Before the end of Wednesday's proceedings, Mr. Kounjiani requested that the cross-examination of the witness be suspended and that prosecutors be given more time to prepare. Mr. Kounjiani explained that defense lawyers for Mr. Taylor had failed to disclose the witness's personal information to prosecutors within the 21 day period required. The prosecution request was granted and so the witness's cross-examination was suspended. On Thursday, a new witness told the judges that RUF leader Foday Sankoh waged a war on Sierra Leone in 1991 to free the people from the misery of the country's politicians.

The witness, a Sierra Leonean and former member of the RUF, told the judges that Mr. Sankoh started agitating for multi-party democracy in Sierra Leone in the 1980s. As he led the wit-

ness in direct-examination, defense counsel for Mr. Taylor, Terry Munyard sought to know what had motivated Mr. Sankoh to wage a rebel war on his own country."What did you understand his purpose in bringing war to Sierra Leone to be?" Mr. Munyard asked the witness."What I understood was that he had launched the war in Kailahun and the war was coming to free the Sierra Leoneans from the misery of these politicians," the witness responded.

The witness explained that he, together with Mr. Sankoh, was a member of an underground group called "The Study Group," which existed in Sierra Leone in the 1980s with an aim of advocating to change "the profoundly corrupt system which characterized governance in Sierra Leone." After Mr. Sankoh started waging war on Sierra Leone in 1991, the witness joined the RUF the following year and said he eventually became the rebel group's "Civilian Coordinator."

Under cross-examination, the witness said that he had "no idea" about where the RUF was formed. Prosecution counsel Mr. Koumjian in an exchange with the witness suggested that the RUF was formed in Liberia. In the exchange below, the witness maintains that he had no idea about the birthplace of the RUF.

"Where was the RUF formed? You said it was formed when you heard Sankoh on the radio in January 1991," Mr. Koumjian said.

"No idea," the witness responded.

"Sir, you know it was in Liberia, don't you?" Mr. Koumjian asked further.

Laughing, the witness insisted that "I said no idea. I've never been to Liberia. I only went to Liberia for the peace process, period."

Mr. Koumjian asked the witness whether his response was because he was afraid of implicating Mr. Taylor "who created the RUF in Liberia."

The witness insisted that he was not afraid of anything.

The witness also refuted prosecution evidence that diamonds mined by the RUF were taken to Liberia and handed over to Mr. Taylor. He made specific reference to a 21 carat diamond which prosecution evidence suggested was taken to Mr. Taylor in Liberia. According to the witness, he was present when

the diamond was discovered by the RUF and when it was handed to Mr. Sankoh. Mr. Sankoh, the witness said, received the diamond one week before his Freetown residence was attacked on May 8, 2000. The witness said that he was part of the team that escaped with Mr. Sankoh that day, but they were unable to take the diamond with them as they had to flee without any belongings. The diamond, he said, stayed at Mr. Sankoh's house in Freetown and was never taken out of Sierra Leone.

On Friday, Mr. Taylor's fourth witness, a Liberian national, told the judges that he was part of the rebel force that trained under Mr. Sankoh at Camp Nama in Liberia in the early 1990s. The witness also recalled the names of other rebel commanders with whom he underwent training at the camp, some of whom have been prosecuted and convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for their role in the crimes committed during the Sierra Leonean conflict. "I can remember Sam Bockarie who is Mosquito, I knew Sam Quelleh, I knew Issa Sesay, I knew Morris Kallon, I knew Augustine Gbao, I knew Jonathan Kposowa, they were many, I can't recall all of their names now," the witness said.

The witness explained that on March 20, 1991, RUF leader Mr. Sankoh took about 150 trainees from Camp Nama to the Liberian-Guinean border in Lofa County. He said that on the orders of Mr. Sankoh, 100 men attacked the town of Koindu in Sierra Leone's Kailahun District. The 100 men who launched the first attack succeeded in capturing several boxes of ammunition and military radios from the police station in Koindu.

Prosecutors have alleged that with Mr. Taylor's help, RUF rebels, among whom were Sierra Leoneans and Liberians, were trained at Camp Nama in Liberia before the 1991 attack on Sierra Leone. Prosecutors say that RUF commanders such as Sam Bockarie, Issa Sesay and Morris Kallon were all trained at Camp Nama. Mr. Taylor has denied the prosecution allegations, saying that he did not provide any support in training RUF rebels and that he had no knowledge of RUF rebels undergoing training at Camp Nama.

Global Sovereignty
Monday, 15 March 2010

Special Court Prosecutor And Registrar Named

An American National, Ms Brenda Hollis has been appointed by the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Banki Moon as successor to Mr. Stephen Rapp who ended his tenure last September, and was deputized by Deputy Prosecutor, Mr. Joseph Kamara, at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Before his appointment,
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An American
National, Ms
Brenda Hollis

Special Court Prosecutor And Registrar Named

From page 1

Ms Hollis has acted in many top positions including principal Trial Attorney in the office of the prosecutor, expert legal consultant in legal international law and criminal procedure. Added to her professional merits, she has also trained Judges, prosecutors and investigators at court and international tribunals in Indonesia, Iraq and Cambodia, she is also in archive as a consultant to the OTP, where she assisted in evidence gathering missions and provided legal and tactical advice.

She also served as senior Trial Attorney at the International criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) and as served as lead counsel in a number of historic prosecution. She paid tribute to Deputy Prosecutor, Joseph Kamara, who was acting prosecutor and express her hope to work with him as she has the greatest professional respect for him.

The Secretary General of the United Nation also named Madam Binta

Mansaray, a Sierra Leonean as Registrar of the special court. Ms Mansaray, who was appointed as Deputy Registrar in 2007 has been acting since 2009. Binta joined the special court in 2003 as outreach coordinator as is remembered for her acclaimed grassroots programmes to keep the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia informed about the court and trials. She has held many positions including consultant with the U.N Mission in Sierra Leone. In another development, Mr. Sulaiman Jabati, of COJA, expressed concern over special court insistence in dealing with the government of Sierra Leone. In his contributions at the SCIF meeting, Mr. Patrick Fatoma, Outreach Coordinator, SCSL, pointed out that the special court ratification act concerns itself with judicial proceedings and not with liquidation exercise.

Update information from the prosecution was presented by Jeremy

Weiser, who spoke on behalf of the acting prosecutor. He said in Charles Taylor's trial, it became difficult for the prosecution to use documents to impeach Charles Taylors account. So as a result, the prosecutor has asked that the appeal chamber make a decision on this issue. In reply, spokesman for the defence office, Mr. Roland Nylander outline the on going cross examination by the prosecution and added that the defence will be pleased with any conclusion arrive at by the appeal court over Charles Taylors's account. Issue relating to family visits to convicts in Kigali- Rawanda was also high on the agenda. One interesting point to note is over allegations that the fifteen monthly appointments to witness the Charles Taylors trial in The Hague has not receive due justice. While the debate continues lengthily, the acting Registrar decided that visit to The Hague should be on a rotational basis "FULL STOP".

Charlestaylortrial.org

Saturday, 13 March 2010

Charles Taylor Did Not Order His Rebels To Commit Crimes And Foreign Countries Prevented Him From Liberating Liberians, Witness Says

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor never ordered his rebel forces to commit crimes, and he was prevented from liberating the Liberian people by foreign countries who interfered in the country's conflict, a defense witness told the Special Court for Sierra Leone this week.

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"Were you ever aware of Charles Taylor giving an order to kill?" Mr. Griffiths asked the witness.

"Never," the witness responded.

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The witness explained that he had been a pan-African revolutionary colleague of Mr. Taylor, adding that he personally did not have any specific interest in helping to start a conflict in Liberia. He said that he did not help Mr. Taylor in his invasion of Liberia in 1989, but that together with some other colleagues who were not named in court today, he moved to Liberia to help provide security for the former Liberian president whose NPFL rebel group was split into two when one of Mr. Taylor's former rebel colleagues, Prince Johnson, led his break-away faction from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) at the initial stages of the Liberian conflict.

On Wednesday, the witness told the court that foreign countries interfered in Mr. Taylor's revolution in Liberia and prevented the former president from liberating his people.

"The Liberian revolution failed because foreign hands interfered in the Liberian revolution to disturb the revolution and prevent His Excellency President Taylor from liberating the country," the witness said as he finished his direct-examination on Wednesday.

The witness also told the judges that Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeeping force was not neutral in the Liberian conflict. He said that the peacekeepers were more sympathetic towards the other Liberian warring factions at the expense of Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group.

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The witness, a Sierra Leonean and former member of the RUF, told the judges that Mr. Sankoh started agitating for multi-party democracy in Sierra Leone in the 1980s.

As he led the witness in direct-examination, defense counsel for Mr. Taylor, Terry Munyard sought to know what had motivated Mr. Sankoh to wage a rebel war on his own country.

"What did you understand his purpose in bringing war to Sierra Leone to be?" Mr. Munyard asked the witness.

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The witness also refuted prosecution evidence that diamonds mined by the RUF were taken to Liberia and handed over to Mr. Taylor. He made specific reference to a 21 carat diamond which prosecution evidence suggested was taken to Mr. Taylor in Liberia. According to the witness, he was present when the diamond was discovered by the RUF and when it was handed to Mr. Sankoh. Mr. Sankoh, the witness said, received the diamond one week before his Freetown residence was attacked on May 8, 2000. The witness said that he was part of the team that escaped with Mr. Sankoh that day, but they were unable to take the diamond with them as they had to flee without any belongings. The diamond, he said, stayed at Mr. Sankoh's house in Freetown and was never taken out of Sierra Leone.

On Friday, Mr. Taylor's fourth witness, a Liberian national, told the judges that he was part of the rebel force that trained under Mr. Sankoh at Camp Nama in Liberia in the early 1990s. The witness also recalled the names of other rebel commanders with whom he underwent training at the camp, some of whom have been prosecuted and convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for their role in the crimes committed during the Sierra Leonean conflict.

"I can remember Sam Bockarie who is Mosquito, I knew Sam Quelleh, I knew Issa Sesay, I knew Morris Kallon, I knew Augustine Gbao, I knew Jonathan Kposowa, they were many, I can't recall all of their names now," the witness said.

The witness explained that on March 20, 1991, RUF leader Mr. Sankoh took about 150 trainees from Camp Nama to the Liberian-Guinean border in Lofa County. He said that on the orders of Mr. Sankoh, 100 men attacked the town of Koindu in Sierra Leone's Kailahun District. The 100 men who launched the first attack succeeded in capturing several boxes of ammunition and military radios from the police station in Koindu.

Prosecutors have alleged that with Mr. Taylor's help, RUF rebels, among whom were Sierra Leoneans and Liberians, were trained at Camp Nama in Liberia before the 1991 attack on Sierra Leone. Prosecutors say that RUF commanders such as Sam Bockarie, Issa Sesay and Morris Kallon were all trained at Camp Nama. Mr. Taylor has denied the prosecution allegations, saying that he did not provide any support in training RUF rebels and that he had no knowledge of RUF rebels undergoing training at Camp Nama.

The witness's testimony continues on Tuesday.

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Saturday, 12 March 2010

Liberian Witness Says Sierra Leonean Rebel Forces Were Trained in Liberia

Alpha Sesay

A 300-strong force of Liberians and Sierra Leoneans were based in Liberia and trained under a top Sierra Leonean rebel leader before attacking Sierra Leone in 1991, a protected Liberian witness told the Special Court for Sierra Leone today. Former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, however, denies knowledge of Sierra Leonean rebels training in his country.

Testifying in open session but whose name and personal information were not shared with the public, the witness told the judges that he was part of the rebel force that trained under Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader, Foday Sankoh, at Camp Nama in Liberia in the early 1990s. The witness also recalled the names of other rebel commanders with whom he underwent training at the camp, some of whom have been prosecuted and convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for their role in the crimes committed during the Sierra Leonean conflict.

"I can remember Sam Bockarie who is Mosquito, I knew Sam Quelleh, I knew Issa Sesay, I knew Morris Kallon, I knew Augustine Gbao, I knew Jonathan Kposowa, they were many, I can't recall all of their names now," the witness said.

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This is the fourth witness to testify in defense of Mr. Taylor who is on trial for allegedly providing support to RUF rebels in Sierra Leone during the West African country's 11-years civil war. Mr. Taylor has denied all prosecution allegations against him.

Meanwhile, a Sierra Leonean witness told the Special Court earlier today how Sierra Leonean government forces executed suspected rebel collaborators without trial during the country's brutal civil conflict – and chose which suspects to kill based on the way they looked.

The Sierra Leonean witness, DCT 068, said he feared for his life and fled Freetown after his government's forces started summarily executing about 20 suspected Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels a day after the country's war broke out in 1991.

"For fear of my life, I fled Freetown and joined the RUF in the Sierra Leonean town of Zogoda in 1992," the witness said.

Zogoda, also known as Camp Zogoda served as the headquarter base of the RUF until it was attacked and destroyed by forces loyal to the Government of Sierra Leone in 1996.

Describing how government forces carried out summary executions of suspected rebels and collaborators, the witness explained that "anybody they see, they just say one, two, three, four, five — you come out. Then they take them to the cemetery and give them summary execution without going through any judiciary process and I witnessed that in Kenema."

The witness added that the manner of one's appearance was a determining factor in deciding whether to associate one with rebel forces.

"If you are not well dressed, you know that is how they use to associate you with rebels. If you are in coat and tie, you will not be executed," he said.

The testimony of the protected Liberian witness continues on Tuesday as the court room will be used for other International Criminal Court trials on Monday.

Observer

Sunday, 14 March 2010

<http://www.texasobserver.org/artsandminds/item/>

"War Don Don" Examines International Justice

By Michael May

War Don Don is one of the most thought-provoking documentaries you will see this year. It tells the story of the trial of accused war criminal, Issay Sessay, a leader of the rebel army in Sierra Leone during the country's brutal civil war. The rebels not only abducted and trained children to become killers, but also used mass amputations, rape, murder and abductions in their campaign to take over the country. Needless to say, it's hard to imagine how Sessay could be a sympathetic character—the fact that he does is not the only surprising thing about this movie, which packs more information in 90 minutes than just about any other film like it.

The film takes you inside the expensive and time-consuming process of international justice. In this case, the international war crimes tribunal sets up a Special Court in Freetown, and spends more than \$200 million on the trials of ten men, who are considered to be the most culpable for the atrocities. The first half of the movie builds the case for justice, by letting you absorb the bone-chilling accounts of the war by the victim's themselves and taking you along as Chief Prosecutor David Crane travels the country building public relations for the tribunal. It's amazing to see hundreds of villagers crowded around small television sets watching the trial, completely engaged and hungry for justice.

But after the filmmakers have you ready to see heads roll, they slowly unpeel the court's process, leaving you ultimately unsure of Sessay's guilt, and whether an individual could ever get a fair trial in an international court. In Sessay's trial, many of the key witnesses are themselves war criminals, but thanks to their cooperation are being paid handsome salaries to testify. This creates a huge incentive for the witnesses to lie in order to implicate the defendants, but any attempt by the defense to point this out is brushed aside by the judges. It becomes clear that the court has incredible incentive to convict, and the prosecutors take to their role with such eagerness that they paint defendants out to be monsters—the chief prosecutor offers that Sessay "has no soul." But, at the same time, we see how this effort to cast blame has it's own rewards. Through interviews with Sierra Leoneans, we understand how these trials can help a country move towards peace.

But in this context, can an individual get a fair trial? Probably not. The defense argues that Sessay himself was a moderate among the rebels, and actually had a role in protecting individuals. They say that he was far away from where atrocities were happening, and due to the guerilla nature of the war probably had limited knowledge of what was happening and no way to stop it if he did. Sessay eventually takes control of the rebel army and offers unconditional surrender. In effect, he was the man who brought peace to the country, even if he had a hand in war. The filmmakers interview Sessay himself in jail, but he remains an elusive figure. The court, unsurprisingly, finds him guilty of the most heinous crimes (rape, child soldiers, attacking peacekeepers, etc.).

In the end, the film raises more questions than it answers, which is mostly to it's benefit. (Most docs feel too long at 90 minutes. This one felt too short.) The film spends so much time examining international justice, that I ultimately felt like I didn't fully get to know Sessay. Was he an idealist or an opportunist? What did he know about the atrocities and when? Who exactly did mastermind the scorched earth policy? Does he feel any guilt for his role? These questions will have to wait for the director's cut.

War Don Don plays tonight, Sunday March 14, at 7:15pm at the Alamo South Lamar. The final showing is March 20 at 1:45 at the Alamo Ritz.



United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary
12 March 2010**

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian Registry breaks 100 mill gt barrier

<http://www.tankeroperator.com/news/todisplaynews.asp?NewsID=1847>

The Liberian Registry has passed the milestone figure of 100 mill gt on 4th March with the christening and delivery of a 51,000 dwt bulk carrier. Speaking at the delivery ceremony at the Oshima Shipbuilding Company in Nagasaki, Scott Bergeron, COO of the Liberian International Ship & Corporate Registry (LISCR), the US-based managers of the Liberian Registry, said, "In the past five years alone, the Liberian Registry has grown by 40 mill gt. That is twice the growth rate claimed by its nearest competitor in terms of total tonnage rankings over the same period, and establishes beyond dispute that Liberia is far and away the fastest growing quality shipping flag in the world."

Wife of war crimes suspect Charles Taylor gives birth

BBC

The wife of Liberia's ex-President Charles Taylor - on trial in The Hague for war crimes - has had a baby girl, his family spokesman says. Sando Johnson told the BBC Victoria Addison-Taylor would soon take her back to Monrovia to meet the family. "Mr Taylor is overjoyed with the birth of his daughter," said his lawyer. Mr Taylor denies backing rebels who committed widespread atrocities throughout the 1990s in Liberia's neighbour Sierra Leone. He already has two girls with his current wife, who moved to the Netherlands for the duration of the trial. The baby was born in February but her birth has only just been made public. The spokesman said he did not know how many children Mr Taylor had altogether. He married Victoria shortly before stepping down as president and going into exile in Nigeria in 2003. His first son, McArthur "Chuckie" Taylor, a US citizen, was sentenced in January to 97 years in prison in the US after he was convicted of torture and war crimes during Liberia's civil war.

Liberian President praises P4P

<http://www.wfp.org/stories/liberian-president-praises-p4p>

"This is one of the best projects that we have going in the country" declared Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia. "This is one of the best projects that we have going in the country" is how President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia described Purchase for Progress (P4P) during a ceremony to hand over a semi-industrial rice milling machine to the Dokodan Farmers Cooperative, one of the farmers' organizations involved in the project, in Gbedin, Nimba County. Four machines will be donated and deployed in three different counties (Lofa, Nimba and Bong) to improve the efficiency of farmers' groups in rice processing, help them meet higher quality standards and increase their know-how in the use and management of appropriate technologies. During the ceremony - attended also by the US Ambassador to Liberia - Linda Thomas Greenfield, the Chinese Ambassador to Liberia,

the Ministers of Agriculture, Education and Employment - the Dokodan Cooperative also handed over 60 metric tons of rice purchased by WFP for the school meals programme in the country. Launched by WFP and implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Gender and Development, FAO, and UNDP, P4P in Liberia is supporting 6,000 smallholder farmers improve their farming practices, ensure a market for their crops, and earn more money as a result. With the new machines, farmers can process and package their rice to meet minimum market standards.

International Clips on West Africa

Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire / UNOCI chief and RDR chairman discuss electoral process

<http://appablog.wordpress.com/2010/03/12/cote-d'Ivoire-unoci-chief-and-rdr-chairman-discuss-electoral-process/>

ABIDJAN, Côte d'Ivoire, March 12, 2010/African Press Organization (APO) — The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Y. J. Choi, continuing his consultations with the Ivorian political actors, met on Thursday, in Abidjan, with the Chairman of the Rally of Republicans (RDR), Alassane Dramane Ouattara. "The discussion focused on the crisis-resolution process and the election," said the chief of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), after this meeting. Mr. Choi also said that the meeting was part of the consultations which had been initiated before the Security Council meeting on Côte d'Ivoire on 17 March. With regard to the electoral process, the Special Representative said it was necessary to re-launch the electoral dynamic which has been weakened. "Now we need to have clear perspectives and know exactly where we are," he said. In this regard, Mr. Choi reiterated the three major principles to consolidate the achievements made so far in the process. These are peace and stability, safeguarding past achievements, including the provisional electoral list, as well as the production of the definitive electoral list as quickly as possible.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone: Former Health Minister Convicted

<http://thepatrioticvanguard.com/spip.php?article5051>

According to an Anti-Corruption Commission press release, Sheiku Tejan Koroma, former Minister of Health and Sanitation was Tursday March 12 convicted by the High Court presided over by Justice Mary M Sey of offences of: Abuse of Office contrary to Section 42(1) of the Anti-Corruption Act 2008, Abuse of Position contrary to Section 43 of the Anti-Corruption Act 2008, and Wilfully failing to comply with laws and procedures and guidelines relating to procurement, tendering of contracts and management of funds, contrary to section 48 of the Anti-Corruption Act 2008. Mr. Koroma was indicted in November 2009 by the Anti-Corruption Commission. The Prosecution had alleged that Mr Tejan-Koroma without reference to any law or procedure abused his office and his position by overturning the decision of the Evaluation Committee and the Procurement Committee in failing award of a contract to supply the Ministry of Health Laboratory reagents to the most responsive bidder following a call for bids to be submitted in October 2008. It further alleged that the conduct of the Minister led to inordinate delay in the award of the contract causing grave consequences for the bidder and the Ministry. The Anti-Corruption Commission further alleged that the Minister also failed to carry out the ruling of the Independent Procurement Review Committee when ordered by them to award the contract to the most responsive bidder, following the bidder's complaint to that body.

London Mining to spend \$300 Million on Sierra Leone project

Sierra Leone (Reuters) - London Mining will spend \$300 million over four years to develop its Marampa iron ore project in Sierra Leone, and expects first tailings output within 12 months, its CEO said. The Marampa iron ore deposit is among Africa's biggest, but had been left largely unexploited for decades in a country still healing from a 1991-2002 civil war. "First production will be in 12 months," London Mining CEO Graeme Hossie said at a press conference late Thursday, marking the mine's official opening. "We expect to invest over \$300 million in the operation over the coming four years." London Mining received Sierra Leone's parliamentary approval for the project, located about 75 km east (45 miles) of the capital Freetown, last month and pledged an initial investment of \$80 million during 2010 to start development of a 1.5 million tonnes per year tailings starter operation. Primary ore development of 5-8 million tonnes per year is expected by the end of 2013, the company said.

Local Media – Newspaper

Swedish Government Makes New Pledges To Liberia

(Daily Observer, The News, The Analyst)

The government of Sweden has announced a new development strategy for Liberia. The new Swedish Ambassador to Liberia, Mrs. Carin Wall said the new development strategy looks at increased and stringent cooperation of annual support to Liberia. Ambassador Wall speaking Thursday when she presented her Letters of Credence to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said such increment will be made by one hundred percent from 2009 to 2011. The strategy will focus on democratic governance and human rights as well as the promotion of agriculture, private sector investment and trade. The Swedish Ambassador said the move is intended to help government address the issues of poverty and unemployment. Speaking earlier, President Sirleaf thanked Sweden for contributing to the country's debt waiver regime and the restoration of peace to the post-war nation. Two other diplomats including Messrs Gerben Sjoerd De Jong of the Netherlands and Akin Fayomi of the African Union also presented their Letters of Credence to President Sirleaf during the week.

Vice President Boakai Launches Land Commission

(Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The News, In Profile Daily, Liberia Journal, The Informer, National Chronicle)

A Land Commission has finally been launched in Liberia with an appeal for support and cooperation from all sectors of the society. Vice president Joseph Boakai performed the official launching ceremony Thursday at the headquarters of the newly established commission in Sinkor. According to Vice President Boakai, the Land Commission was crucial to the maintenance of peace in Liberia. He said the commission needed the necessary support in order to enhance the land reform process and develop a comprehensive national land tenure policy for the improvement of the country. The Chairman of the Land Commission, Dr. Cecil Brandy called for 'the political will' to make tough decisions regarding crisis. Dr. Brandy said settlement of land disputes would be one of the key priorities in the Commission's first eighteen Months of operation.

Senate Holds Special Session To Question Finance Minister

(Heritage, National Chronicle)

The Senate has announced a special session this Friday, March 12 amidst reports that its allowances have been withheld by the Finance Ministry. The Senate said the special session would discuss issues of national concerns and hear from Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan. Senate spokesman Varney Gbessay said Minister Ngafuan is to appear and brief the Senate about the performance of the 2009/2010 budget. He said the Senate will also discuss the controversial threshold bill with talks emerging about a consensus building. Meanwhile, the Senate has passed into law an Act to amend the Public Health Law of Liberia to create a Commission on HIV/AIDS.

Monday is J. J. Roberts' Birth Anniversary, Declares National Holiday

(Daily Observer, New Vision)

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has by proclamation declared Monday, March 15, 2010 as the 201st Birth Anniversary of the late President Joseph Jenkins Roberts, and is to be observed throughout the country as a National Holiday. According to a Foreign Ministry release, the day is in recognition of Joseph Jenkins Roberts' invaluable sacrifices and services rendered as the First President of the Republic. The proclamation is in consonance with an Act passed by the Third Session of the 42nd Legislature, declaring each Birth Anniversary of the First President of Liberia, a National Holiday.

Third National Judicial Confab Ends Today

(The Inquirer)

The Third National Judicial Conference ends today, March 12, in the Chambers of the Supreme Court at the Temple of Justice. The Conference brings together a cross section of legal practitioners with a high calibre of lawyers delivering papers on eleven different topics. Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis is expected to deliver the 12th conference paper which will look at the adoption of a resolution and the adjournment of the Conference.

Lawmakers To Cite Security Heads, Following Lofa, Capitol Bye-pass Incidents

(The Inquirer, The News)

The House of Representatives on Thursday resolved to summon heads of security agencies to provide update on the current state of security in the country. The House's decision was taken following a communication from Maryland County Representative Bhofal Chambers requesting plenary to cite heads of security apparatus to comment on the gruesome killing of Police Inspector Amos Tutu. Representative Chambers said he strongly believes that the country has a security problem.

Star Radio (News monitored today at 09:00 am)

Vice President Boakai Launches Land Commission

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Swedish Government Makes New Pledges To Liberia

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Senate Holds Special Session To Question Finance Minister

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky FM, and ELBC)

High Court Orders Power TV Case Halted

- Chambers Justice Kabineh Ja'neh has placed a stay order on the request for a writ of subpoena Duces Tecum against the management of Power TV.
- Subpoena Duces Tecum is a writ that compels a person or entity to produce certain document in Court.
- Criminal Court "A" had ordered the Management of Power TV to produce a video clip that shows the burning of officer Amos Tutu to death, which Power TV had refused on grounds it, would have made it a party to the case.
- A writ of prohibition issued Thursday by directive of Justice Ja'neh mandated Judge Sikajipo Wollor to stay further proceedings into the matter pending the outcome of a conference next Tuesday.

Information Minister-Designate Accuses Former Boss

- Information Minister designate Cletus Sieh has revealed that the administration of Laurence Bropleh at the Information Ministry lacked teamwork.
- According to Mr. Sieh activities at the Information Ministry were unilaterally handled by his former boss.
- Mr. Sieh made the statement during a confirmation hearing before the Joint Senate Committee on Information and Broadcasting, and Judiciary.
- During the hearing, conflicting accounts also emerged between Mr. Sieh and the Deputy Minister-designate for Administration Norris Tweah.
- The conflicting accounts relate to the ownership of the radio programme "Changing Minds and Changing Attitudes" being hosted by former Minister Bropleh.

- Mr. Sieh told the Committee the programme is an initiative of Dr. Bropleh while Mr. Tweah said the radio show was a quasi government programme funded by the United Nations Development Programme.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Dutch Company Wins Free Port Bid

- The Netherlands based APM Terminals has won the bid for the privatization of the National Port Authority.
- Government's inter-ministerial committee for the Freeport of Monrovia announced the Dutch company won the bid ahead of other bidders this week.
- According to a statement, APM Terminals and the Government will begin negotiation next month for what appears to be a 25-year agreement.
- The Dutch company will invest 120 million dollars in the port and create about 650 jobs.
- According to a the Chairman of the National Investment Commission, Dr. Richard Tolbert, APM Terminals will construct a new 300-meter marginal wharf with marine service equipment as well as construct new warehouses, operational facilities and administrative offices among others.

Liberia Marketing Association Draft Act Suffers Setback

- A draft Act seeking to establish the Liberia Marketing Association (LMA) has suffered a setback at the House of Representatives.
- The setback relates to the decision of the House to return the draft Act for additional Committee hearings.
- The House took the decision after majority of its members objected to any attempt to hastily pass the bill.
- Montserrado Representative Kuku Dorbor told the House the bill still needs to be reviewed in a public hearing because of protest by some founders of the LMA, while Representatives Evans Koah and Dixon Yarsiah expressed serious concerns over section 6 of the bill, which provides for the LMA to take over all market structures through negotiation.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 09:45 am)

USAID, LIPA Graduate First Group Of Public/Private Sectors Trainees

- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Liberia Institute for Public Administration (LIPA) will today Friday graduate the first group of public and private sectors trainees in Monrovia.
- USAID in a press statement said the trainees have completed the first round courses offered through the financial management and capacity building programme.
- The press statement says USAID and LIPA launched the programme as a direct response to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's emphasis on capacity building in Liberia.

Associated Press
Saturday, 13 March 2010

Ex-Liberian President Taylor's wife has baby girl

By JONATHAN PAYE-LAYLEH

MONROVIA, Liberia — A family spokesman says that the wife of detained former Liberian President Charles Taylor has given birth to a baby girl.

Sando Johnson says the child was born to Victoria Addison-Taylor last month in the Netherlands, but that mother and child will return to Liberia "very soon."

Johnson told The Associated Press Friday that this is the couple's third daughter together.

The two wed during the last days of his regime in 2003. They both lived in exile in Nigeria up to the time of Taylor's arrest on war crime charges in 2006.

The former president is accused of 11 counts of murder, rape, sexual slavery, cruelty, forced labor and recruiting child soldiers as he supported rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone. He has denied all allegations.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Friday, 12 March 2010

Self-representation at the ICTY

By Hermione Gee



*The Hague,
Netherlands*

The latest delay in the trial of Radovan Karadzic at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has raised questions about whether the

tribunal is penalizing the former Serbian leader for choosing to represent himself during his war crimes trial in The Hague.

The trial is on hold while the appeals chamber reviews a submission by the defence asking for more time to prepare. Last month, ICTY President, Patrick Robinson, ruled that the Registrar's decision to restrict legal aid funding to the defence was "completely unreasonable." Robinson said Karadzic should be allowed funds to cover eight assistants, working full-time. Karadzic is now asking for a postponement to make up for time lost following the Registrar's original ruling.

The debate over trial-phase funding is the latest in a series of appeals lodged by Karadzic's team. Other points of contention have been the amount of time allotted to the defence to prepare for trial, the amount of pre-trial funding made available to the defence, and the appointment of standby counsel, where the court appointed British barrister Richard Harvey to "represent the interests of the Accused" against Karadzic's wishes.

"Hostility"

"I don't think the institution is being very upfront about its own hostility to Karadzic's self-representation," says ICTY defence counsel Wayne Jordash. "There's a real risk that Karadzic, by choosing to represent himself, is effectively being pushed into a situation where he cannot represent himself effectively: you have an accused...being asked to proceed to trial with undue haste, combined with the possibility that if he's not able to conduct the proceedings in a way that the court appreciates, they'll impose a counsel who he has had nothing to do with."

Peter Robinson, legal advisor to Karadzic, puts it more bluntly:

"The Registrar is totally prejudiced against people who represent themselves - I would say more than prejudiced, paranoid - and the experience they've had with Milosevic and Šešelj probably is the reason for that."

"There's a general assumption that anybody who chooses to exercise their right to self-representation is doing so to be obstructive," adds Jordash. This means, he says, that any delay in proceedings is attributed to the accused when, often, it's due to the size of the prosecution case.

"Instead of these institutions regarding their primary function as the conduct of fair trials, they hang on to the notion that the primary function is somehow to create a historical truth, and so the prosecution set out to prove a whole war and attribute the consequences to a single accused. And as a consequence of that, the trials take an inordinate amount of time."

"Political platform"

But, says former ICTY chief prosecutor Richard Goldstone, the practical problems raised by self-representation can't be ignored:

"Self-representation certainly makes the work of the judges and the prosecutor more difficult. It may be difficult to run the trial efficiently as the consent of the accused to making concessions or avoiding unnecessary and long formal evidence may be difficult, if not inappropriate, to seek. There is also the inability to cross-examine either efficiently or to the point...Finally, there is the wont of self-representing accused to use the court as a political platform."

Regarding the questions of standby counsel, Goldstone says, "I fully agree that the defendant should be consulted...The problem is that it is highly unlikely that the defendant will agree to the appointment, let alone participate in choosing who they should be."

Hybrid model

Bjorn Elberling wrote his doctorate on the position of the defendant in international criminal proceedings. He agrees that "many of the [judges'] decisions amount to punishment of the self-represented accused...[and are] not really consistent with the fact that they say they give you the right to represent yourself."

But, Elberling says, many international criminal trials - where the alleged crimes took place within the course of complex political events - "call for an active role for the defendant." Legal advisor Peter Robinson says this is precisely the issue in the Karadzic case: "Dr. Karadzic wants to represent himself because he wants the floor during the trial. He feels he knows these events in Bosnia better than any lawyer could learn them and he feels that...if he represents himself, he'll be able to be heard every day to put forth his side of the story."

Elberling proposes that a way to reconcile the accused's desire to participate in the trial, with the courts' concerns about delays and obstruction, would be to institute a kind of hybrid system, where the accused is represented by counsel, but still has "the right – the right, not the privilege – to make submissions in court or ask questions, cross-examine witnesses or whatever. In a couple of cases at least, this could lead to defendants choosing not to represent themselves."

Agence Fraance Presse

Friday, 12 March 2010

Croatia wins Australia appeal on war crimes extradition

By International Justice Desk



Perth, Netherlands

Croatia Friday won the right to appeal to Australia's highest court to force the extradition of an ethnic-Serb former paramilitary leader who is accused of war crimes.

The Federal Court ruled in

September 2009 that Dragan Vasiljkovic was not eligible for extradition.

But a panel of judges Friday ruled Croatia's lawyers should be allowed to argue against the decision to the High Court, a spokeswoman said. "Leave was granted to appeal in that matter," the High Court spokeswoman said. "They have now got to prepare and lodge their appeal documents, it would be a couple of months yet," she added, referring to when the case could be heard.

Vasiljkovic was born in Belgrade but is now an Australian citizen who goes by the name Daniel Snedden. He walked free from prison last September after spending almost four years behind bars, when the Federal Court ruled he had established a "substantial or real chance of prejudice" if he was sent to Croatia for trial.

Vasiljkovic (54) successfully argued that Croatian authorities were seeking to try him, in part, because of his belief that ethnic Serbs in Croatia's Krajina region have the right to self-determination. The ex-golf instructor was arrested in January 2006 after Croatia requested his extradition to face charges over atrocities during the nation's 1991-1995 war of independence from the former Yugoslavia, opposed by rebel Serbs.

Zagreb accuses Vasiljkovic of involvement in the torture and killing of Croatian civilians and prisoners of war in the rebel Serb stronghold of Knin in 1991 and the southern village of Bruska in 1993. He has denied committing war crimes but has admitted in media interviews to training Serbian recruits, killing in combat and interrogating enemy troops.

(AFP)

The Observer (Uganda)

Sunday, 14 March 2010

ICC petitioners wasting their time - Museveni



President Museveni

NRM bureau will use SMS, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Hi5, YouTube and the website www.nrm.ug to reach supporters

President Museveni has said that he is ready to face The Hague-based International Criminal Court if indicted over the killing of at least 30 people in last September's riots in Kampala and parts of Buganda.

Some youth with links to the Inter-Party Alliance recently petitioned the ICC, seeking the indictment of the President, the Chief of Defence Forces, Gen. Aronda Nyakairima and the Inspector General of Police Maj. Gen. Kale Kayihura over the deaths.

But the President said on Friday that the petitioners were wasting their time.

"Those people going to The Hague are wasting their time—they are just making a fool of themselves," said the President while opening the NRM Communication Bureau on Plot 87, Kira Road in Kamwokya, a Kampala suburb.

"If I committed crimes against humanity, I would be very happy to be tried," Museveni said.

The President added that the killing of those civilians did not amount to crimes against humanity as the petitioners claim. Museveni said that only genocide or mass rape can be described as crimes against humanity.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines 'crimes against humanity' as offences that constitute a serious attack on human dignity or grave humiliation, or a degradation of one or more human beings.

The President further said that a case can be taken to the ICC only when the local system is unwilling or unable to handle the matter.

To demonstrate that the country has internal capacity to deal with impunity, the President said that 123 soldiers have been executed over murder since he came to power in 1986 .

“Even when we catch [LRA leader, Joseph] Kony, we will try him here and not in The Hague. Here; we shall hang him but if you send him to The Hague they will just put him in a hotel,” he said.

The only sitting head of state to ever be indicted by the ICC is Sudan’s Omar el Bashir.

WAR OF WORDS

While launching the bureau, the President said that it will enable his NRM party fight the “war of words” with the media, which he accuses of unfairly bashing his government.

“We helped to create media houses by creating a good atmosphere for them but now they are mainly bashing NRM and telling lies. The new generation of NRM will fight our war of words with them,” he said.

The President further said that the bureau is a landmark in the history of NRM and it will be used to tell the NRM story. The bureau will use communication tools such as mass SMS, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Hi5, YouTube and their website www.nrm.ug to reach supporters locally and abroad.

Writers have been hired to write articles for the website and also to do a daily update of photos and speeches. Through its 6,760 mass text messaging, the party plans to send updates and party information to the 14 million Ugandans estimated to have mobile phones.

“This will be used to respond to criticism about NRM and [detoxicate] venom about NRM in the public,” said the NRM Spokesperson, Mary Karoro Okurut. “The bureau is going to help us to quicken the flow of information and also end the problem of lack of communication with our supporters,” Museveni said.

smwesigye@observer.ug