

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



Thousands attended yesterday's Episcopal Ordination of Fr. Edward Tamba Charles as Catholic Archbishop of Freetown and Bo. The ceremony took place at the National Stadium.

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:

Thursday, 15 May 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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New Citizen
Wednesday, 14 May 2008

Crunch Time At Taylor Trial, But His Lawyer Says They Are Confident

The former Liberian president Moses Blah is expected to testify on Wednesday 14 at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in the trial of the man he succeeded, Charles Taylor. The two have had a long-standing relationship dating back to the founding of their National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

Blah's appearance may be delayed if defence lawyers do not complete the cross-examination of a prosecution insider witness, Karmoh Kanneh, a former RUF commander. Many believe the former Liberian president's appearance will be quite revealing as he's expected to give evidence on a wide range of events relating to charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity against his former boss. The office of the Prosecutor says Mr Blah will speak about circumstances surrounding the killings of RUF battlefield commander, Sam Bockarie and AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma in Liberia alleg-



*Former Liberian V.P.,
Moses Blah*

edly by personnel subordinate to Mr Taylor.

One of Mr Taylor's lawyers, Terry Munyard says Taylor and his Defence team have nothing to fear as long as Mr. Blah will say the truth. He told these reporters, "We're perfectly happy to have former President Blah's evidence, and we look forward to hearing it. And our position is that Mr. Blah is simply going to tell the truth and there's nothing to fear."

However he goes on to say that although they are not frightened by Blah's appearance, he sees one problem. "The problem that we face – both Mr. Taylor and his lawyers – is that there's been a huge, sustained propaganda campaign against him over many years now. And one of the real difficulties is that

lots of people can tell you Mr. Taylor is a bad man and he's done awful things. But almost none of them can tell you what it is that he's done. And that's simply because his name has been besmirched over the years in a very unspecified way."

Speaking to these reporters earlier, the prosecutor of the court, Steven Rapp said Mr Blah did not wish to have his identity protected hence would appear under his own name. The prosecutor said the former Liberian leader had failed to appear earlier because of ill health. "I don't want to discuss people's health if they haven't already, but he [Mr Blah] indicated that he has high blood pressure and that he needed to make sure that that problem is taken care of before he could travel, and that he would have a medical release from his doctor" he said.

He assured that all the issues, including alleged threat made against Mr Blah, had now been resolved.

Moses Blah served as Charles Taylor's vice president and was Taylor's immediate successor as Liberian president when Taylor left Liberia for exile in Nigeria in August 2003.

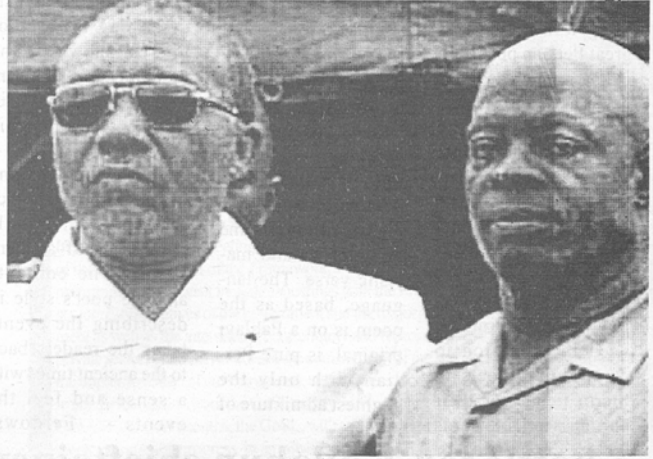
The News

Wednesday, 14 May 2008

Ex-President testifies in Taylor's trial today

By Alphonsus Zeon and Adolphus Williams in The Hague

The former Liberian president Moses Blah is expected to testify today Wednesday 14 at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in the trial of the man he succeeded, Charles Taylor. *Cont. page 2*



MONROVIA, Jimmy Sajaan.

Ex- President testifies in Taylor's trial today

From front page

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The office of the Prosecutor says Mr Blah will speak about circumstances surrounding the killings of RUF battlefield commander, Sam Bockarie and AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma in Liberia allegedly by personnel subordinate to Mr Taylor.

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say the truth. He told these reporters, "We're perfectly happy to have former President Blah's evidence, and we look forward to hearing it. And our position is that Mr. Blah is simply going to tell the truth and there's nothing to fear." However he goes on to say that although they are not frightened by Blah's appearance, he sees one problem. "The problem that we face - both Mr. Taylor and his lawyers - is that there's been a huge, sustained propaganda campaign against him over many years now. And one of the real difficulties is that lots of people can tell you Mr. Taylor is a bad man and he's done awful things. But almost none of them can tell you what it is that he's done. And that's simply because his name has been besmirched over the years in a very unspecified way."

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He assured that all the issues, including alleged threat made against Mr Blah, had now been resolved.

Moses Blah served as Charles Taylor's vice president and was Taylor's immediate successor as Liberian president when Taylor left Liberia for exile in Nigeria in August 2003. Blah will be led in evidence by Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court, Stephen Rapp. It will be the first time that Rapp has led a witness in the Taylor trial.

Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground

The News
Wednesday, 14 May 2008

INTERVIEW:

Special Court Chief prosecutor on Taylor's 'stolen' assets

Last year the United Nations Security Council agreed to set up a three-member panel of experts to probe into the 'hidden wealth' of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who has been accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 11-year conflict in Sierra Leone. According to the Special Court Chief Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, experts are trying to uncover Mr. Taylor's wealth, which they claim he acquired from illegal blood diamond and timber trade in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. He says they have located \$ 375 million being part of Mr Taylor's wealth.

Adolphus Williams met with Stephen Rapp in The Hague and first asked him about this discovery.

RAPP: Well, we found bank transactions in accounts that were in his personal name and were being used for his personal purposes. There's been a little bit of misinformation about this. We did find two accounts in the US in which there were \$5 billion of activity - \$5 billion US in activity - but a lot of it was money moving back and forth between the two accounts in order to maximise daily interest payments. But at least \$375 million we've identified as moving out of those accounts into other banks in the US and elsewhere around the world, and we're continuing a tracing exercise following those funds to the present to see how much is left. But we don't know at this stage how much is left. Given the circumstances we believe there are going to be some assets left here that could be available to be frozen by the UN and then eventually available, if Taylor is convicted, for reparations for Sierra Leonean victims but of course to the extent assets can be traced to Liberia and to public funds in Liberia. Clearly there will be a right for Liberia to recover as well.

If we can show money being used to buy arms going to Sierra Leone, money going to the Ukraine or something, that could help our case. That's why we've been looking at this for a long time. Additionally we have the right, if we obtain a conviction for the crime of pillage, to obtain a forfeiture order equal to the amount of property pillaged from Sierra Leonean victims. And we're presenting evidence about diamond pillage, there's a particular shipment that we're [indistinct] a number of evidence about was taken from Johnny Paul Koroma that was about 1,900 diamonds that we think have been valued at several million dollars. If we can prove in the end of the day that Taylor pillaged diamonds from

Sierra Leone we can get a forfeiture order against him.

WILLIAMS: How are you going to prove that? How are you going to determine money from Liberia, money from Sierra Leone that formed part of Taylor's wealth? It sounds difficult, you know.

RAPP: Well it involves the tracing exercise, and at the end of the day what I'm hoping on, and when I meet with Liberian and with Sierra Leone authorities I discuss ways that we could share the gains, so to speak. At the end of the day it may be difficult to tell whether money in an account came from Sierra Leone diamonds or whether it came from Liberian timber. There may be a case to make in both situations, and the money's been moved around and some has been spent, and all of that. So I think in the end of the day there will be a need to work out a formula for distribution between the two countries. But the critical thing at this point is to locate the funds, because if we locate the funds we can get them frozen by the UN under the Security Council resolution.

WILLIAMS: So all what Taylor accumulated before, during and after the war is classified illegal and should be confiscated?

RAPP: Well, Global Witness has done studies in this area about money taken from various sectors of the Liberian economy during Taylor's administration. They estimated it at least \$100 million a year during his six years as president. The strongest evidence was the timber products study, the concession study that was done by the Liberian government in partnership with a number of foreign aid agencies that resulted in the end in the cancellation of all timber concessions in Liberia at that time. And that study I think came to the conclusion that at least 84 percent of the money gained from the timber industry during Taylor's administration ended up in Taylor's pocket, where it should have ended up in the treasury. And so that's something that's there, but there's certainly evidence of other diversions of ship flag of convenience money and [indistinct] other places where Taylor might have gotten to the treasury. But that's going to have to yet be proven. That's not directly relevant to us in Sierra Leone except to the extent that it can be shown that that's the source of this money... and certainly we have to recognise the Liberians have a claim to stolen assets,

and you can't use stolen assets, stolen from the people of Liberia, to compensate people in Sierra Leone. So that's why at the end of the day I think there'll have to be a formula or an arrangement or a negotiation.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Rapp, let's make an assumption here. Assuming the Court does not find Mr. Taylor guilty, and now the assets of the accused are frozen, \$375 million located, is it not like we are putting the cart before the horse?

RAPP: Well we have to find the assets first in order to justify what we're doing in the Court, and so if at the end of the day we get a judgment for several million dollars which should go back to the people of Sierra Leone, it won't do us much good unless we've frozen the resources. The United Nations, under Security Council resolutions, has the right - indeed the Sanctions Committee is mandated with an order to freeze Taylor's assets, or to freeze the assets that are in the hands of third parties that came from Taylor. So that needs to be done in any case. And even if Taylor is acquitted, people in Liberia and others could have claims to get that money back based upon grounds other than war crimes. It's not just on war crimes that you can recover money. You could recover money because it's theft. You could recover it under a lawsuit saying that Taylor's men had committed a particular injury to you and it would be a whole different standard. Just because we would not succeed, others could succeed in the future. But it makes sense for everyone to work together to maximise the amount of assets that are located and frozen. Once that's done I think then we'll move forward to share it.

WILLIAMS: And the Defence team agrees with you?

RAPP: Well, no! The Defence team obviously contests whether Taylor took money. To a large extent that's not directly relevant in the case. What's relevant in the case is whether he pillaged assets from Sierra Leone. They of course have pled 'not guilty' on that. We will have to prove that. The question of how much assets he has today, that will only become relevant to the Court once we have a conviction, if we get one, for that particular offence. Then the Court will have to determine whether an order should be entered that would allow us some of that money to be taken by the Court, sent to Sierra Leone, or it could be distributed to victims.

Independent Observer
Thursday, 15 May 2008

more in page 2

Special Court delivers another judgement at 10am today

**By Our Crime
Reporter**

The Appeal Chamber of the Special Court in Freetown will this morning deliver judgement in the matter in which CDF indictees, Alieu Kondewa and Monina Fofanah challenged their

earlier conviction and sentence.

They were both ordered to serve light jail term, inclusive of the period already spent in detention since their arrest and which could have seen one of them walk out of prison early next year.

Still not satisfied with the judgement of the Trial Chamber, their lawyers went on to appeal their sentence..

On the other hand, the prosecution which had earlier asked the court for lengthy jail term as was in the case of the AFRC indictees who were jailed a total of 155 years, were dissatisfied with the CDF judgement.

Today the three Judges have two options; to either uphold the judgement of the Trial Chamber or impose fresh sentence, on the accused persons.

Health Minister off to Geneva

Agence France-Presse

Wednesday, 17 May 2008

Liberian commanders 'ate human innards'

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Liberian rebels cooked and ate human innards while serving under warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor, his former deputy testified Wednesday at the exiled leader's war crimes trial.

A member of Taylor's presidential guard, Nelson Gaye, "had the habit of eating fellow human beings," the former vice-president Moses Blah told the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a war crimes tribunal in the Hague.

"I saw one incident with my own eyes. I visited a camp... he roasted the hands of a human being, then ate them with boiled cassava," Blah said, in a testimony that also detailed a key link between Taylor and rebels in Sierra Leone's civil war.

He said Gaye and his men also cooked human intestines and ate them with cassava. "You could not enter the unit without doing that."

Gaye was the head of the marine unit of Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia, a movement founded in the 1980s with the aim of invading the west African country to drive out its then leader.

Blah said he himself had been in charge of supplying arms to Taylor's fighters for their coup attempt in 1989.

Blah, 61, was the 27th witness in the trial of Taylor, the first head of an African state to be tried by an international court. Blah briefly led the country in 2003 after Taylor was forced into exile in Nigeria.

The court hoped his testimony would shed light on Taylor's alleged support for the former rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which ravaged neighbouring Sierra Leone in a 1991-2001 civil war, leaving 120,000 dead.

Blah testified that Taylor met the future head of the RUF, Foday Sankoh, in the camp, where they were received by Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi.

Kadhafi gave Taylor half a million dollars after the Liberian was elected president in 1997, said Blah, who was ambassador to Tripoli at the time.

Taylor faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and recruiting child soldiers in connection with the rebellion. He pleads not guilty to all the charges, and sat taking notes during the testimony.

Blah said that child soldiers, some younger than 13, were widely used in the ranks of the FNPL, in so-called "small boys units." Some joined voluntarily while others were kidnapped, he said.

Taylor allegedly funded and armed the RUF in exchange for diamonds and other resources, while rebels terrorised civilians by cutting off arms, legs, ears and noses, leaving thousands mutilated.

Taylor's trial before the UN-backed special court was moved from Freetown to The Hague for fear that his presence in Sierra Leone would destabilise the region.

Associated Press

Wednesday, 14 May 2008

Witness: Gadhafi helped Taylor take over Liberia

By MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Moammar Gadhafi's Libyan government ran a training camp in the 1980s that prepared Charles Taylor's troops to seize power in the West African nation of Liberia, a key witness at Taylor's war crimes trial testified Wednesday.

Moses Blah, who served as vice president under Taylor after he rose to power in Liberia, is the highest-ranking witness to testify against his former boss since the trial began early this year in the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Blah's testimony was the strongest link yet in the prosecution's case against Taylor that Gadhafi had a hand in his rise to power and also linked the Libyan leader to other bloody African insurgencies.

Taylor has pleaded not guilty to charges that include murder, rape, torture and enlisting child soldiers during the 10-year civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone that ended in 2002. Prosecutors allege he orchestrated the atrocities from his presidential power base in Liberia's capital, Monrovia.

Blah said he was among about 180 rebels recruited by Taylor and flown to Libya in the late 1980s to undergo months of military training. The fighters learned to use AK-47 assault rifles and surface-to-air missiles at a military camp near Tripoli, he said.

Rebels from countries including Gambia, the Philippines and Sierra Leone were also at the camp, Blah said. Among them was Sam Bockarie, one of the Sierra Leone rebels who Taylor is accused of supporting.

"Bockarie called him 'chief,'" Blah said.

Taylor's forces entered Liberia late in 1989, triggering a civil war that lasted years and left thousands dead.

After Taylor grabbed power in Liberia, Gadhafi sent Taylor's regime a shipment of crude oil to sell so the proceeds could be used to buy "military hardware," Blah said.

Blah had originally been slated to give evidence anonymously, but he later decided to speak in open court despite a death threat e-mailed to his family. His testimony was expected to continue several days.

In an example of the brutality of the conflict in Liberia — and foreshadowing later atrocities in Sierra Leone — Blah said that one rebel commander "had a habit of eating fellow human beings" and that fighters only joined his unit if they were prepared to take part in cannibalism.

Blah said he once visited the commander, Nelxon Gaye, at a camp in a rubber plantation and found him roasting human hands. "He did it over a fire and he ate it with boiled cassava."

The 61-year-old Blah briefly served as Liberian president in 2003, assuming power after Taylor was forced into exile. Neither man looked at the other as Blah, walking with the help of a cane, entered the trial chamber.

Blah's testimony, which will continue Thursday, is expected to detail how Taylor allegedly controlled rebels in Sierra Leone from Liberia. Such evidence is critical to prosecutors seeking to link Taylor to the savage conflict in that country.

Taylor's trial is being held in a courtroom rented from the International Criminal Court because of fears that prosecuting him in Sierra Leone could spark new violence.

Reuters

Wednesday, 14 May 2008

Charles Taylor's former deputy testifies in trial

THE HAGUE (Reuters) - Charles Taylor's deputy testified in the war crimes trial of the former Liberian president on Wednesday, describing how a Sierra Leonean rebel leader answered to his boss.



Moses Blah was Taylor's vice president from 2000 until he took over as interim president for three months in 2003 after Taylor stepped down and accepted asylum in Nigeria as part of a peace plan.

Blah was subpoenaed to testify in Taylor's trial for instigating murder, rape and terrorism in Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war, arming Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in return for diamonds.

More than 250,000 people died in intertwined wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The fighting in Sierra Leone began when ex-army corporal Foday Sankoh and his RUF took up arms.

Asked about relations between Taylor and Sankoh dating back to the 1980s, Blah told the court: "He called Mr Taylor chief."

Blah also described his first encounter with Liberian child soldiers, some aged 13 and even younger: "Little boys were dragging their weapons behind them."

"They were very aggressive indeed ... they were unreasonable and they had no sense of direction."

Blah is the 27th witness the prosecution has called of the some 72 it plans to question in a trial that got underway in earnest in January. Taylor denies all charges against him.

Stephen Rapp, the chief prosecutor of the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, told Reuters last week that Blah, like other witnesses, had been threatened.

The trial is being held in the Hague for fear of destabilising West Africa. Last month a former fighter told the court he had killed men, women and babies on Taylor's orders and had eaten the heart of a former rebel leader.

BBC

Wednesday, 14 May 2008

Taylor's vice-president testifies

The war crimes trial of Liberia's ex-President Charles Taylor is hearing evidence from his former deputy.

The BBC's Grant Ferrett at the Hague says as Moses Blah took the witness stand, he was careful not to look at the man he served for nearly 20 years.

He gave the court a detailed account of Mr Taylor's bloody rise to power and acknowledged the use of child soldiers.

Mr Taylor is on trial accused of backing rebels who committed atrocities in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

Mr Blah is expected to give evidence later about the war in Sierra Leone.

Mr Blah became vice-president of Liberia in 2000. He became president after Mr Taylor was forced into exile in 2003.

However, he was only Liberian president for two months, until October 2003, when a United Nations-backed transitional government was sworn in.

'Not worried'

Mr Blah is the most senior figure to give evidence at the trial since it began in January.

He came to the Hague reluctantly, but said he intended to tell the truth.

"I'm not going to crucify him - he's my former boss," Mr Blah told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme before travelling to the Hague.

"I have nothing personal against President Taylor - we worked together almost like brothers; we had a revolution going together, so I don't think I'm going to betray him," he added.

In court Mr Blah provided a detailed insider's account of the early days of the civil war.

He said he was one of the first 20 or so rebel fighters who received training at a military base in Burkina Faso.

It was not until a larger group was assembled at a military camp in Libya that Mr Blah met Mr Taylor.



Moses Blah was Liberian president briefly in 2003



Charles Taylor denies war crimes and crimes against humanity

They trained alongside rebels from The Gambia, Sierra Leone and the Philippines, all of them supported by the Libyan authorities.

Mr Blah told the court that when the time came to invade Liberia, three truck loads of weapons were provided by the defence minister of Ivory Coast.

Within days of crossing into Liberia in 1990, Mr Blah says he was briefly detained by child rebel fighters recruited by his own side.

He said they were used because they took orders and were "unreasonable and aggressive".

A lawyer representing Mr Taylor, Terry Munyard, told the BBC his client was not worried about Mr Blah's evidence and if he told the truth there was nothing to fear.

During Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war, which officially ended in 2002, tens of thousands of people died and thousands more were mutilated, raped and had limbs amputated.

Mr Taylor's case has been transferred from Sierra Leone to the Hague for security reasons, although it is still being conducted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Mr Taylor denies 11 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Voice of America

Wednesday, 14 May 2008

Charles Taylor's Former Deputy Testifies at Sierra Leone War Crimes Trial

By VOA News

Charles Taylor's former deputy has begun testifying at the ousted Liberian leader's war crimes trial before a U.N.-backed court in The Hague.



Moses Blah, who was Taylor's vice president, is expected to testify at length about how Taylor allegedly directed the actions of rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone during that state's 10-year civil war - a conflict marked by extreme brutality.

Taylor says he is not guilty of the charges against him - murder, rape, torture, recruiting child soldiers and pillaging Sierra Leone's towns and villages. The Liberian president, who seized power in Monrovia in an earlier military campaign, was forced to leave his homeland for exile in Nigeria in 2003, a year after the conflict in Sierra Leone finally ended.

Moses Blah (2003 file photo) Taylor is accused of supplying weapons to Sierra Leone's notorious Revolutionary United Front fighters, in return for so-called "blood diamonds" supplied by the RUF.

Former Vice President Moses Blah also served briefly as Liberia's interim president following Taylor's departure. He began his testimony Wednesday by recalling how rebel fighters addressed Taylor as "chief." The 61-year-old Blah is said to have decided to appear in open court despite receiving death threats. He is expected to testify for several days.

One account from the court in the Dutch capital says neither Taylor, who is 59, nor Blah, who walks with a cane, looked at each other as the witness took the stand.

Blah is the highest-ranking witness to testify against Taylor, who is the first former African head of state to face international charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Previous testimony has described gruesome practices, including cannibalism and mutilation of civilians, that occurred during Sierra Leone's civil war. Blah is the 27th of 72 witnesses the prosecution expects to call.

The U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is prosecuting Taylor, moved proceedings from Freetown to The Hague to reduce chances of sparking unrest in the west African state or in Liberia, which borders Sierra Leone on the east.

Some information for this report was provided by AFP, AP and Reuters.

SABC (South Africa)

Thursday, 15 May 2008

Blah testifies against former comrade Taylor



Richard Newton

Former Liberian President, Moses Blah, has begun giving evidence in the trial of his predecessor, boss and former comrade in arms, Charles Taylor.

Testifying in the war crimes trial against Taylor in The Hague, Blah told the court of his ties to Taylor were from before the start of the civil war in Liberia in 1989 until Taylor fled into exile in 2003.

Blah served in Taylor's National Patriotic Front rebel movement for 10 years. He was vice-president of Liberia under Taylor and succeeded him, albeit for only two months, when Taylor went into exile in 2003.

Blah will give evidence in court of former comrade-in-arms, Taylor

Taylor's history heard in court

Yesterday, the court heard about the early days, when Taylor was leading rebels trying to overthrow the government of Samuel Doe. They heard that Taylor would not tolerate any action against Liberian civilians by his soldiers.

Less than a decade later, Taylor is alleged to have funded the Revolutionary United Forces (RUF) rebels in Sierra Leone. The rebels were responsible for the murder, rape and mutilation of tens of thousands of civilians.

It is the solid link between Taylor and the RUF rebel group that prosecutors hope Blah can give them. Reviewing Blah to explain the years of civil wars, lawlessness and power struggles in both Liberia and Sierra Leone is likely to be a long and painstaking progress.

BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 14 May 2008

Charles Taylor's war crimes trial entered a crucial stage Wednesday when former Liberian President Moses Blah, a key associate of Taylor, testified in court.

Blah opened up, detailing the support of Libya, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast to Taylor and his NPFL rebels in fighting the government of Samuel Doe.

He also spoke of how NPFL fighters killed and mistreated civilians in Sierra Leone.

Blah confirmed Prosecution allegations that Taylor supported the RUF rebels.

Adolphus Williams has more.

BLAH: I drove by a place called New Gbarnga. That was the time I saw Foday Sankoh that morning. I stopped my car and I alighted and embraced him, and I said I have not seen him for a very long time, since in Libya. He said, "Look, I am here now. I am a rebel commander. I am no more a small boy and you have to salute me", and I saluted him and I said, "Okay." I said, "Okay, I know you are my boss now." He said, "Look, I have come here for a serious matter", and I asked him what the matter was. He said, "The boys from NPFL, whom the chief sent to help me, they got involved into a lot of atrocities, raping women, looting people's property and killing people, and these are the people I have gone to liberate and I am losing respect amongst my tribesmen. This was what I have come to consult with the chief on."

WILLIAMS: Blah had his back turned to Taylor as he gave evidence of the former Liberian President's support to the rebels in Sierra Leone.

Blah entered the courtroom from a direction directly facing Taylor. He had a walking stick clutched in his right hand. He watched his steps, his eyes drilling the courtroom floor as he picked his way to the witness seat. Nevertheless, he was calm throughout his testimony.

Moses Blah said he had told Taylor of the RUF leader's worry about the crimes Liberian fighters were committing in Sierra Leone. But he said Taylor brushed Sankoh's concerns aside.

BLAH: It was not really a conversation. He was walking around his palace where he lived in Gbarnga and I went close to speak to him, to salute him. Any conversation, he said he didn't know earlier that Foday Sankoh had talked to me about this matter. He said, "Look, your man Foday Sankoh is here and he is saying that the people are destroying his people, looting his property." He said how could the war be fought? When you talk about a guerrilla war it is destruction and this type of thing must happen if you are fighting a war. You are not eating bread and butter, you are fighting. If he continues with such a report, according to him he will withdraw his men from there.

WILLIAMS: He named Christopher Varmoh and Duopoe (Dopo) Mekazon as two of the commanders Taylor sent to Sierra Leone to fight alongside Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front, the RUF.

BLAH: At the initial stage there was a small group of Liberian soldiers moving. They were a little bit more than the RUF.

PROSECUTOR STEPHEN RAPP: Why do you say there were more Liberians than RUF?

BLAH: That is an information from my soldiers, from my information, my radio communication and their location. My operator would brief me on what was happening.

RAPP: Well, did you find out the reason why the soldiers had gone in?

BLAH: Yes, they said they were fighting alongside. It was later that I knew that they were in there.

RAPP: And who were they fighting alongside?

BLAH: The RUF.

RAPP: And what was the RUF?

BLAH: RUF are forces headed by Sankoh – Foday Sankoh.

WILLIAMS: Blah's appearance refreshed the interest in Taylor's trial. The empty press centre after the January opening became full again and the public gallery where people sit to watch the trial puffed up.

Taylor sat calmly, looking in Blah's direction and occasionally hanging heads with his lawyers. He broke the silence at one point when he laughed at the Presiding Judge's inquiry to Blah whether it was Agnes or Tupee, which one of them was Taylor's wife in the beginning of the NPFL civil war.

Wednesday court session saw Chief Prosecutor Steven Rapp himself leading the questioning of Blah as Taylor's lead lawyer, Courtney Griffiths, backed by Terry Munyard and Morris Anyah listened and took notes patiently waiting to challenge Blah's credibility as a Prosecution witness. The direct examination by Rapp continues Thursday.

For the BBC World Service Trust / Search for Common Ground - Adolphus Williams – the Hague

Plain Truth (Liberia)
 Tuesday, 13 May 2008

Blah's "419s" Exposed

-Finally In The Spotlight

The unfortunate history of Liberia will once again be on display when two-month old former President Moses Z. Blah shows up in court to face his former boss, Charles Ghankay Taylor and perhaps put the final nails to his 'coffin.' No witness has ever come so close of being an insider of the Charles Taylor re-

gime than Moses Blah who, in later years, survived by the skin of his teeth from death row and inarguably became Taylor's number two, filling in the gap after his ignominious removal from power.

It would be a battle for pecuniary gains and life between two former comrades-in-arm, but the reality would be the introduction of a trai-

Continue on Page 6



tor, a rival of Judas, in person of Moses Blah facing the man who created him from political scraps.

What is interesting is that Blah thought he could easily dribble the prosecution by claiming to be an insider, lure the prosecution in paying him money and then reneging on his pledge. But his tricks have let him down—the prosecution has warned of serious consequences if Blah fails to say what he is required to tell the court on record and for which he has already been paid huge sum of money.

The prosecution will specifically require of Blah to establish first Taylor's links with Burkina Faso, Libya and then with the RUF and

how it was trained, financed and armed.

Blah was Taylor's ambassador to Libya and knew or had reason to know how the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was organized, by whom, and how it was supplied with arms and ammunition. Out of court Blah has always said he has no knowledge on who founded the RUF and how it was financed and supplied with arms and ammunition.

At a recent press conference Blah denied ever killing Sam Bockarie and maintained that he did not know who the organizers of the RUF were.

"I was assigned in the southeast of the country, so I did not know who killed Bockarie or who organized the RUF", he said.

But in his response to a reporter question, Blah conceded that he once fed Bockarie and Benjamin Yeaten with food on their way to the Liberian-Ivorian border on a patrol at the time he (Bockarie) was wanted by the UN backed Special Court.

In previous testimony given the prosecution, Blah is said to have said he had knowledge of organizers of the RUF, its financiers, trainers and suppliers of arms.

Insiders say the prosecution will be attempting to ask Blah to refresh his memory and say exactly what he has told them in private to form part of its case on the court record against his former boss, President Charles Ghankay Taylor.

There are strong indicators judging from Blah's past records that he could prove to be a dependable witness for the prosecution or a hostile witness who could throw the entire trial into total disarray.

"Blah will be afraid to look Taylor in the face and speak and might do what everybody least expect against the prosecution" said a lady who has been closely monitoring Blah activities since it was announced that he has been invited by the Special Court.

In previous comments, Blah said he would neither be a witness for the prosecution nor the defendant but will speak the truth to close the trial. Whatever truth Blah tells the court will have a far reaching effect on the conduct of the trial.

How Blah will reconcile his persistent denial of having no knowledge about the formation, supply of arms to the RUF and the killing of Bockarie with what the prosecution would want him to say to corroborate whatever evidence it is gathering, remains a serious test.

But one thing that is certain is that Blah is expected

to showcase his skills in 419s in a trial that is full of so many dramas.

National Chronicle (Liberia)
 Tuesday, 13 May 2008

Editorial

SIRLEAF, BLAH GIVE LEGITIMACY TO SPECIAL COURT'S CASE AGAINST TAYLOR

FORMER PRESIDENT MOSES Z. Blah is in The Hague, Netherlands, to testify in the Special Court trial of ex-President Charles Taylor. The chief prosecutor of the U.N.-originated court confirmed Blah's arrival in The Hague, and that he is scheduled to testify today, May 13, 2008, or tomorrow, May 14, 2008, serving as witness for the prosecution. Blah declared, before departure from Monrovia, that he would tell the truth and nothing but the truth. But of course as witness for the prosecution his evidence will serve to build up the prosecution's case against ex-President Taylor.

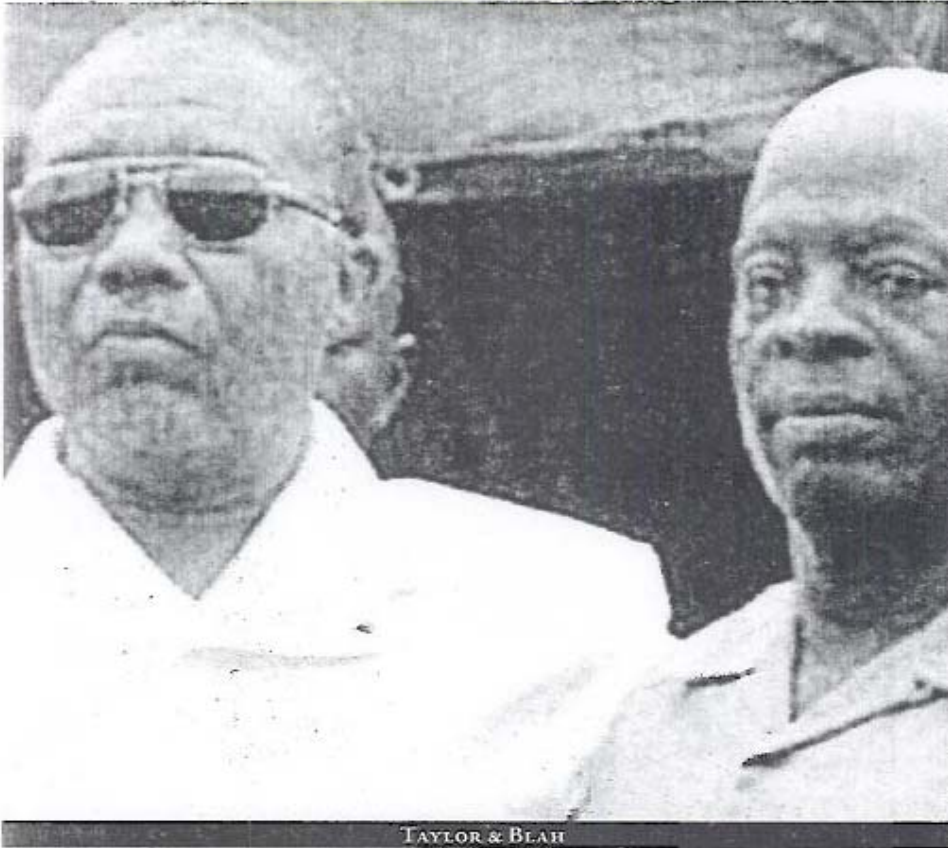
BLAH BECOMES THE highest ranking official of our government to join the endless list of prosecution witnesses in the Taylor trial. Along with ex-President Taylor, it speaks volumes of that court's ability to bring to book the mighty of our government, whenever and wherever, making them answer to its standards of international justice. In Taylor's case, President Sirleaf, out of fear of been barred from much needed international assistance, turned over the ex-President and washed her hands Pontius Pilately; in Blah's case, he willingly walked to the court. Some said he was induced with money; he himself said he was subpoenaed, with the threat of seven-year imprisonment, if he did not comply.

BLAH, FORMER INSPECTOR-general in the defunct, crimes-laden National Patriotic Front of Liberia, becomes the witness of enormity. Other witnesses before him may have sufficed in giving field information that has certainly proved useful to the prosecution, but Blah, by status, rank and power, becomes the authoritative witness the prosecution needs to have the court dance to its drum. No wonder the threat of imprisonment. As former NPFL's inspector-general, Vice President under Charles Taylor and eventually President after him, Blah provides that uncanny blending of NPFL crimes and government legitimacy the Special Court needs to nail Charles Taylor. It may be able to get that in a few other witnesses, but none with Blah's magnitude.

MOSES Z. BLAH, like Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, gives legitimacy to the Special Court's case against ex-President Taylor. When President Johnson-Sirleaf in April 2006 turned over Taylor to U.N. troops, she was, as President, telling the United Nations Taylor was wrong and she and her government wanted to part of him. To exonerate herself from public criticism, she claimed the Taylor issue was an international affair and well beyond her jurisdiction. Blah, former President, testifying against Taylor, gives the same interpretation. If current President Johnson-Sirleaf could turn over an ex-President of the nation and ex-President Moses Z. Blah could testify against him, where then is the illegitimacy in the Special Court's attempt to bring Taylor to justice? There is none. **AT HOME AND** in the outside world, Liberians will be reading the Blah testimony. The internet will publish it, and so will the print media at home. As a witness for the prosecution, the intent of the testimony will become debatable as far as diverging views on the Taylor case is concerned. If the testimony proves especially damaging to Taylor's defense, he could become a real or self prisoner of vengeance. As regarding his own reputation in society as an ex-President, he has reduced himself to suspicion of inducement to testify against his ex-boss. And this is not totally dismissible because major international media are now raising eyebrows on the Special Court's spendings on witnesses for the prosecution. He has become one of those transported, hotel-lodged, fed and given spending money to testify against Taylor. An ex-President. If his concern was to only speak the truth and nothing but the truth, why did he not shoulder the financial responsibility himself? That's what men of character do. The test of his character will lie in the testimony he gives today or tomorrow and the public's response to it.

New Democrat (Liberia)
Tuesday, 13 May 2008

Defiant Blah Faces Taylor Today



TAYLOR & BLAH

Despite reports of death threats against if he testifies, former President Moses Blah will stare his former boss and ally in the face today, 5 years after he took over the realms of power from a man with whom he trained in Libya to ignite one of Africa's most destructive wars.

Mr Blah, who served as Mr Taylor ambassador to Libya after the 1997 elections, will give evidence regarding Libya's military and other backing the National Patriotic Front of Liberia and the Revolutionary United Front. As an original NPFL, the court said Mr Blah could reveal the formation of the group and its operations, along with the death of former Sierra Leone junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma.

New Democrat (Liberia)
 Tuesday, 13 May 2008

Ex-RUF Commander Links Taylor To Bockarie's, Ivorian Rebel Chief's Deaths



A former commander of Sierra Leone's erstwhile rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), has linked former President Charles Taylor to the execution of Sam Bockarie, RUF Commander, and Phillip Duo, Commander of Cote D'Ivoire's rebel group believed to have been based

here.

Witness Karmoh Kanneh told the Court Monday as Mr Taylor watched that Bockarie had been detained at a police station here for 4 days, and that he had feared for his life. He said after his release, Mr Taylor informed him he had a mission for him (Bockarie), which was to execute the Ivorian rebel leader, which, he said, he concluded Bockarie carried out.

The witness confirmed Zigzag Marzah's an earlier witness and confidante of Mr Taylor, self-confessed cannibalism, saying he saw Mr Marzah cook human meat in Foya. He further claimed there were weapons shipment from Taylor to the rebels in Sierra Leone, and that Mr Taylor has killed Bockarie to prevent him from testifying before the Court. *(See excerpts of the testimony on pp6&7)*

Special

Ex-RUF Commander

Links Taylor to Bockarie's, Ivorian Rebel Chief's Deaths

Pros: Back to what we were talking about on Friday afternoon. You said there was a time sometime after the May 2000 Freetown incident that you went to Monrovia. You said your meeting with Taylor was canceled. You said you spent four to five days there. You said the day after you arrived you met Sam Bockarie at White Flower. Where did you meet Sam Bockarie?

Wit: It was at Mr. Taylor's house. Where his chief security, Benjamin Yeaten, was. That was where Sam Bockarie met us.

Pros: Whereabouts in the house?

Wit: In the front of his house.

Pros: Who was present when you met Sam Bockarie?

Wit: I was there. Director, Benjamin, and Sam Bockarie was there. And Benjamin Yeaten's security officers and signal men were there.

Pros: What was the name of the security officers?

Wit: One of them was called Mani?

Pros: Can you name the signal man who was there?

No. He was a strange man to me.

Pros: On Friday, you said you and Sam Bockarie exchanged greetings. Did you have any further conversation?

Wit: No. We spoke and what we said was that we greeted each other. After we greeted each other we made an appointment to meet. He wanted us to discuss but the Director was there.

Pros: What do you mean?

Wit: He said he wanted us to discuss something but because Benjamin Yeaten was there we should meet at his house.

Pros: Did you meet at his house?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: Where was his house?

Wit: Four Houses Road led to his house.

Pros: Had you been to this house before?

Wit: No.

Pros: Did you go with anyone else?

Wit: No.

Pros: When you went there, did you meet with Sam Bockarie?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: Was anybody else present?

Wit: Yes. I saw this child and his mother and his wife and some other people I did not know.

Pros: Was anyone else there?

Wit: There were both men and women. I couldn't recognize them.

Pros: Did you speak to Sam Bockarie?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: Where?

Wit: He invited me to his bedroom.

Pros: In the bedroom, who was there?

Wit: We met his wife. His wife was in the room.

Pros: Tell us what was said when you spoke to Sam Bockarie.

Wit: At first, it was about the RUF business. The way the RUF had treated him. He said the RUF had been ungrateful to him. From that time that he had left the RUF and he had put a curse on the movement and he would continue to put a curse on the movement. That the movement would never succeed. He said he was sorry for the way he was using us during the war, that the movement would never be successful.

Pros: Who was using you during the war?

Wit: Sam Bockarie. Because he was the commander.

Pros: Any other topic he spoke about?

Wit: Yes. He said he was discouraged because he had just come from the police station and he was in detention for three to four days. I asked why. He said the President Taylor said that he had a lot of pressure from the international community to hand over Sam Bockarie. Sam Bockarie said he would explain Taylor's relationship with the RUF to the Special Court. After three to four days he was released and returned to his house.

Pros: Did he tell you what happened after he was released?

Wit: He did not tell me about any

other thing. I don't think any other thing happened. He told me that he was worried about his life. He told me that the Pa had a mission for him. When I asked the type of mission he would not disclose that to me.

Pros: Did he tell you why he was worried for his life?

Wit: He said, the Pa said he had a lot of pressure for him to be arrested. That is why he said he was worried for his life. At the same time he said the Pa had a mission for him.

Pros: Did you ever find out what the mission was?

Wit: He did not tell me at the time I was in Monrovia. Later I knew the mission he was talking about.

Pros: How did you find out what the mission was?

Wit: I had returned to Sierra Leone. One morning I heard that Sam Bockarie had killed the second rebel leader, Mr. Phillip Du [ph], in the Ivory Coast. From that announcement I recalled that this was the mission he was talking about.

Judge Sebutinde: Who is the "Pa" that the witness is referring to?

Wit: That is Charles Taylor.

Pros: Second rebel leader of what?

Wit: It was the rebel group that invaded Ivory Coast. He was the deputy rebel leader.

Pros: What was the name of these rebels?

Wit: I did not know it. I did not go there, and I did not know the name of the movement.

Pros: Did Sam Bockarie say anything else to you in the bedroom?

Wit: I think that is where the discussion ended. He took out 100 dollars and handed it to me. I returned to Benjamin Yeaten's place. [Inaudible].

Pros: Did you see Sam Bockarie again after you saw him in the bedroom?

Wit: No. We did not see each other again.

Pros: Did you learn whether anything happened to Sam Bockarie?

Wit: Yes. Later I heard that Sam Bockarie was dead. So I recalled when he said he was worried for his life. I thought again that Mr. Taylor would never hand that man over. I

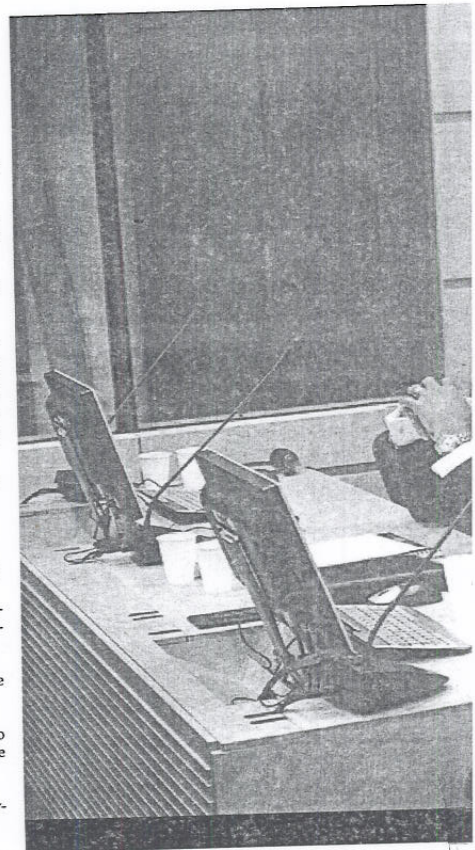
was not there, but I just concluded that maybe that was why Mr. Taylor killed that man. To keep him from coming to this Court.

Pros: What do you mean by that answer?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: Where?

Wit: I was at Benjamin Yeaten when they told me they were to meet Mr. Taylor at the mar



Wit: Issa and Sam Bockarie were not on good terms. There were misunderstandings between them. There was no unity between the two of them. They were not on speaking terms.

Pros: What did you do after you left Sam Bockarie's house?

Wit: I returned to Benjamin's place.

Pros: You said you were in Monrovia from four to five days. Did you know whether Issa Cesay met with Charles Taylor while you were in Monrovia.

did not follow them any lo other day it was the same t

Pros: Who is they?

Wit: When we arrived i via, Issa was not there. H the second day. He and th came to meet with Mr. Tay did not explain to me v spired.

Pros: How many times go?

Wit: Twice. Because we s days, and on the fourth c turned.

Pros: Where did you ret

Wit: We flew back, Issa Cesay and I, to Foya. That was where we left the roops.

Pros: Did you ever find out what took place in the meetings between Issa Cesay and Charles Taylor.

Wit: No.

Pros: How did you travel back to Foya?

Wit: That morning, I saw logistics out in the vehicle in the same field we used to land.

Pros: Where did you see the war materials?

Wit: The dump was at the back of the President's house. It was not far from the Foreign Minister's house. That was where the materials were

present?

Wit: Issa was present. Benjamin Yeaten and his security officers were present. And I saw ZigZag Mahzar, Moni Captain, and other soldiers I cannot recall.

Judge Sebutinde: Is there a difference between logistics and materiel?

Wit: I take them to have the same meanings.

Pros: Who was ZigZag Mahzar?

Wit: ZigZag was one of the President's security officers.

Pros: Who do you mean by President?

Wit: Mr. Taylor.

Pros: When you saw ZigZag, was

Wit: Yes.

Pros: What happened with ZigZag.

Wit: During this same military operation we went with Sam Bockarie on the attack. We captured a soldier we all decided to release. In the morning, we went to ZigZag's place. I saw meat in a pot. He told me it was the man he had killed. I saw some other meat being dried. From that time I feared him. I never saw a human being do that.

Pros: You never saw a human being doing what?

Wit: Eating another human being. That created fear in me.

Pros: You said you saw meat in a pot and meat being dried. Did you see ZigZag do something with the meat?

Wit: Yes. If somebody was just killed, you can usually identify that person. I was able to identify him.

Pros: What group was this soldier with?

Wit: The LURD forces.

Pros: Was that head attached to a body?

Wit: No.

Pros: I take you back to the materials at the back of White Flower. What happened to that material?

Wit: I saw the materials being loaded into two vehicles. One van and a Jeep.

Pros: Who loaded the materials?

Wit: Boys. ZigZag's bodyguards.

Pros: What happened to the material?

Wit: We moved. We were called and we went on board the other vehicle. When they had loaded the materials they brought another jeep. We went to that vehicle and went to the field.

Pros: Who went?

Wit: I was there. Issa Cesay and the Director, too. We went in the vehicle that had no materials in it.

Pros: Where did ZigZag go?

Wit: They were together with the materials. In that vehicle.

Pros: Who is they?

Wit: ATUs and ZigZag.

Pros: Which field did you go to?

Wit: The center of the town. I cannot recall because it was my second time in Monrovia. It was the same field we used to land.

Pros: You mentioned ATUs. What are ATUs?

Wit: That was one of the units. Anti-Terrorist Units. They were the ones I used to see at the mansion.

Pros: Do you know the names of any ATUs in the vehicle?

Wit: No. They were strange to me.

Pros: What happened after you got to the field?

Wit: The materials were taken out and transferred to the helicopter. I was concerned why this quantity of materials when there was peace in Sierra Leone. I was not happy about that but I did not ask.

Pros: Why didn't you ask?

Wit: In the military it is a soldier war. There was no need for me to ask. If I had asked, I was just a junior man.

Pros: What happened next?

Wit: After the transfer of materials, we entered the helicopter and we took off. Some soldiers were in the helicopter with the ATU boys. Director did not go with us.

Pros: Where did you go to?

Wit: We landed in Foya.

Pros: What happened after you landed in Foya?

Wit: We loaded all the material in the vehicles. We waited until the evening.

Pros: Why did you wait?

Wit: We were afraid that they will see us.

Pros: Why were you concerned that they would see you?

Wit: They had come for peace and disarmament had started in some areas. We had a fear that if they had seen us with that quantity of materials. The commander told us to wait until night.

Pros: Who was the commander?

Wit: Issa Cesay.

Pros: When night arrived what happened?

Wit: We moved. First we came to Buedu. And later we moved to Kailahun. For me, they left me in Pendembu because that was my base and they continued their journey.

Pros: Why was that material brought to Sierra Leone?

Wit: At that moment I did not as but I was concerned. Later I knew.

Pros: Who told you?

Wit: Issa Cesay.

Pros: What did you tell you?

Wit: I was at my base in Pendembu. He invited me to Kono and told me about the mission and the reason why the materials were brought. I said Mr. Taylor had given the materials to attack Indians from two flanks. Even the money he had told me about was for that mission.

Pros: What money?

Wit: The trip that we went on we brought with us 50,000 dollars. He gave us 50,000 dollars that we brought from Monrovia.

Pros: Who gave you 50,000 dollars?

Wit: He said President Taylor had given us the money and the materials.

Pros: Who had he given it to?

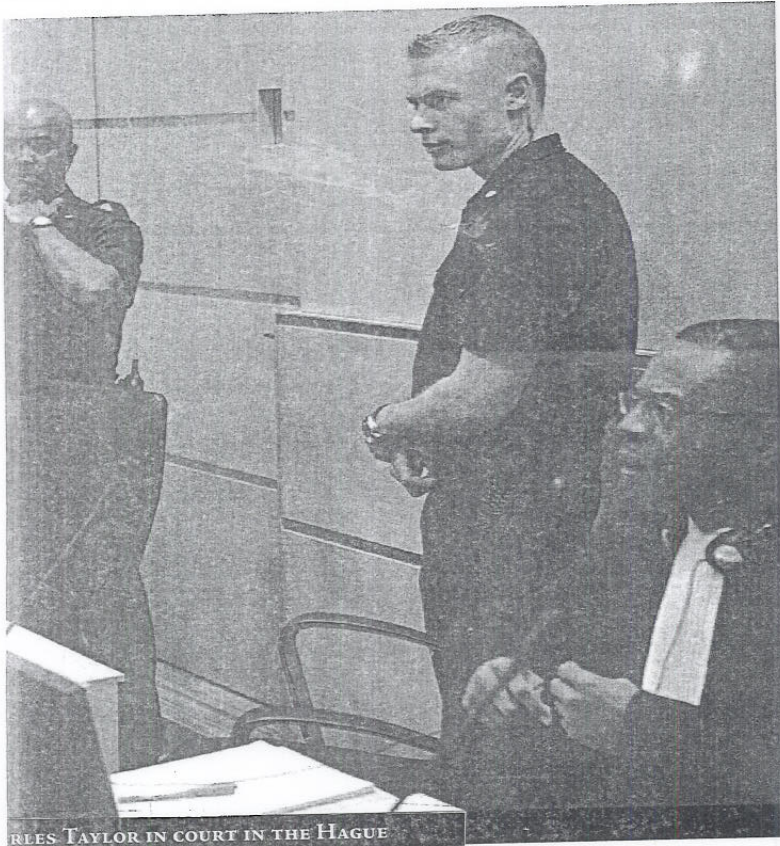
Wit: Issa Cesay.

Pros: Did you ever see the money?

Wit: He told me there was money in the bag.

Pros: When you learned what money and materials were for, what was your reaction?

Wit: In the first place, he told me that Kailahun District that I was controlling. He said Mr. Taylor had given us a mission to get Guinea from two flanks. That was the money and materials. So I did not refuse. I accepted.



CHARLES TAYLOR IN COURT IN THE HAGUE

loaded.

Pros: What materials did you see?

Wit: I saw AK rounds. A good number. RPG rockets, too. A good quantity. AK machine guns. New ones. RPG tubes. They too were in good quantity. And I saw grenades and other materials I cannot recall.

Judge Sebutinde: Is this at Foya?

Pros: He said it was at the back of the President's house.

Wit: It is in Monrovia. The back of the President's house.

Pros: When you were there and you saw this material, was anyone else

that the first time?

Wit: I knew ZigZag. That was not my first time to see him. The first place I knew him was in Liberia, in Foya.

Pros: Did you know anything about ZigZag?

Wit: Well, I didn't know about ZigZag because we were not very close. We met during that same operation around the Foya area. I saw him and Issa, who received the Indians in Pendembu.

Pros: You gave evidence on Friday about the Indians. Is that what you are referring to?

Wit: Just as we arrived he started eating it. He told us it was the boy from yesterday. He took out the hair.

Judge Sebutinde: What do you mean "this was the boy yesterday"?

Wit: The soldier we had captured.

Pros: You said he did something with a head. What did he do?

Wit: The head was not cooked. We saw it raw. He just showed it to us as an example that it was the guy previously.

Pros: When you saw the head, did you recognize it?

Ex-RUF Commander

Pros: What did you do after you accepted?

Wit: He told me to come and inform the other commanders so that we would be able to prepare men to be ready. I invited the officers, we had meeting, and all of us were in the meeting. I told them I was not happy about it, and the men who were there supported me.

Pros: Did that mission take place?

Wit: Well, no. From that day, Foday Sankoh's bodyguard, with whom we had discussed together because we had been told to meet with Moriba Koroma, to meet with Ben Canneh. The following day I heard that disarmament had started in Kailahun.

Pros: The trip you went to Monrovia where you obtained materials took place sometime after May 2000. Right?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: How long after May that this mission was to take place?

Wit: It was at the end of 2000 that this mission took place. Around August or September.

Pros: When did the meeting take place with Canneh?

Wit: In 2000. I cannot recall the exact date now.

Pros: What do you call the end of 2000?

Wit: Just after the first six months. The second half of the year.

Presiding Judge Doherty: What organization did Koroma and Canneh belong to?

Wit: Koroma was a Black Guard.

Pros: What was the Black Guard?

Wit: Black Guard were the special bodyguards. They were Sankoh's bodyguards.

Pros: What about Canneh?

Wit: He was with another security branch that used to give information to the leader.

Defense Counsel Munyard: Are the meeting and the mission two separate things?

Pros: You have referred to a mission. You said you were not happy. Then you referred to a meeting that took place.

Wit: The meeting was different from the mission. It was the mission that brought about the meeting. I called a meeting to explain what my commander had told me.

Pros: As a result of the meeting, what happened?

Wit: It was innate that we discuss that we should not accept participating in that mission. He said we should not disarm. The following day the disarmament started.

Pros: Who is he?

Wit: I was talking about Issa Cesay.

Pros: Did he say why you should not disarm?

Defense Counsel Munyard: I am still confused about mission.

Pros: What mission was discussed during the meeting?

Wit: He told me Mr. Taylor had sent materials for the mission. He said we were to attack there from two flanks.

Pros: Who told you that Mr. Taylor had said this?

Wit: Issa Cesay.

Pros: The meeting concerning the mission. Did the mission take place?

Wit: Yes, it took place later?

Pros: When?

Wit: It was around 2001 that the mission took place. I did not take part in that mission.

Pros: Any idea when around 2001?

TO BE CONTINUED

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Tuesday, 13 May 2008

TUESDAY | MAY 13 | 2008

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NEW DEMOCRAT

Exile Files

"The Plague" Of The British Empire

By Tom Kamara
November 17, 2000

Liberia's President Charles Taylor, issuing his now customary denial of backing Sierra Leone rebels while on his "annual" health trip to Paris, announced to the world that his people are dying and need help from outside. More than that, he announced that Britain, which recently suffered floods, is being punished by his "god" for denying him aid and accusing him of Sierra Leone diamond theft.

"Europe can help to investigate. They can cut off aid, they don't have to like Charles Taylor. But Liberians are dying and they need help. But I

well-paid French doctors are determined to keep him fit for the plunder of Sierra Leone's diamonds and mischief in West Africa.

Nevertheless, many would undoubtedly envy Taylor for the powers of his "god" who facilitated his escape from an American prison on charges of transferring over \$900,000 into a fictitious New York bank account when he served as purchasing agent for a corrupt military junta. Inspired by his "god," he launched a war that overthrew his junta bosses and left over 250,000 killed in a collapsed and ruined economy. His "god" blessed and protected him in looting public

Taylor's "SOS" message is a strange one because, we are told, his people, a la James Jones, have long prepared for death in electing him. "You killed my ma, you killed pa (but) I will vote you", was the campaign song that made their wish very clear. Come what may, hunger or plagues of mass death, they were ready to die. That they are dying is no news.

Fortunately for his people, no matter how long their leader begs, the kind of help they expect is not likely to come, not even from the French who see much humanity in him. More and more people are seeing through the games he has played for years. And

Leone diamonds fields and Liberia's resources, which he controlled for almost a decade. Taylor made promises of building a super economy of plenty. He told illiterate voters that their problems of need were indeed over. One computer for every child, accelerated development throughout the country within two weeks after elections with bulldozers storming in for renewal, the US dollar to replace worthless Liberian notes, immediate electrification of the entire country, etc.

Since his election, reality has overpowered fantasy. Taylor has simply switched rhetoric. Once in office, he informed his people that his "god" would look after their needs since, "We are now on our own." He said their economic problems are the making of an evil international community that despises him. He accused the Americans of betraying him by not developing his country, with one of his loyalists, demanding that the American ambassador "packs his bags and leave" for not helping to develop the country. "We have done everything they told us to do", Senator Thomas Nimely, Chair of the House Foreign Relations Committee. Huge fees paid to American lobbyists did not bring the millions in return, only increased isolation and contempt from the White House and Congress.

The President tried a number of deceptions aimed at convincing donors to pump in millions. When asked to make reconciliation a priority for ensuring stability, he appointed a concubine as chair of his reconciliation commission. Told to respect human rights as precondition for aid, he established a human rights commission and flogged its outspoken member so severely that the man fled in exile. He stage-managed the burning of weapons he could not use, hoping the "international community" could note his "pacifism" and bring in the millions of dollars as reward. When this did not happen, his ministers intensified the stealing of the little money collected in taxes and sale of logs, etc. He saw no problem with the theft. He simply blamed the "international community" for turning

his ministers into greater thieves.

The Liberian ruler, accustomed to underworld operations, mistread the signals. Says UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown: "Participant government is crucial to successful development. Human rights are not as has sometimes been argued, a reward of development. Rather, they are critical to achieving it." He added that, "transparent, accountable and effective systems of institutions and laws" lead to development, and that "Rights make human beings better economic actors." Brown contends that problems of poverty will never be solved unless the poor can participate in decision-making.

But men like Taylor think other wise. Taylor thought he would have been rewarded for promises of respecting human rights and practicing transparency. It was not his belief in human rights that propelled him but dreams of rewards if he made pronouncements he had no intention of honoring.

But Taylor's "god" is a powerful one. His "god" has "punished" Britain for harming "His" son. There is no doubt that with such powers, Taylor should look up to this "god" to save his people from dying. A god that sends floods to enemy lands can certainly build dams, roads, repair the burnt down dilapidated buildings consuming the country, transform primitive agriculture into modern entities, and put abundant food on the table for all true believers. Countries like Mozambique, which suffered one of the devastating floods in history, or Ethiopia, which is undergoing draughts, should simply ask the Liberian ruler to send his "god" in for help.

The point is that the British do not need the intervention of Taylor's "god." They have the money to rebuild. The floods only provided an opportunity for renewal and to spend the money and create jobs. Taylor, on the other hand, must keep begging around the world while he loots his country and Sierra Leone's diamonds to keep going. If only his "god" could offer him the millions of dollars instead so that he can abandon Sierra Leone's diamonds.



SOME LIBERIAN REFUGEES DEPORTED FROM GHANA

am a Christian, so God sent floods to Britain that will cost \$1 billion or [\$] 2 billion. God punished Britain. The British have managed to stop European aid to Liberia."

The Ugandans had their Idi Amin, the self-styled "Conqueror of the British Empire." Now, Liberians have theirs, "The Plague of the British Empire." Whoever said that buffoons and lunatic killers in African politics were the relics of the past in this new century must have a rethink. African-Americans and their white Liberal colleagues who zealously rushed under Taylor's garment of ingrained stupidity even by Liberian standards, seeing him as an enlightened figure for "Continental African leadership", must now see the James Jones character he is. Unfortunately, the American cult leader Jones was not placed in charge of a country, only his lunatic followers. Taylor, on the other hand, is a "democratically elected" President with destructive tentacles within West Africa.

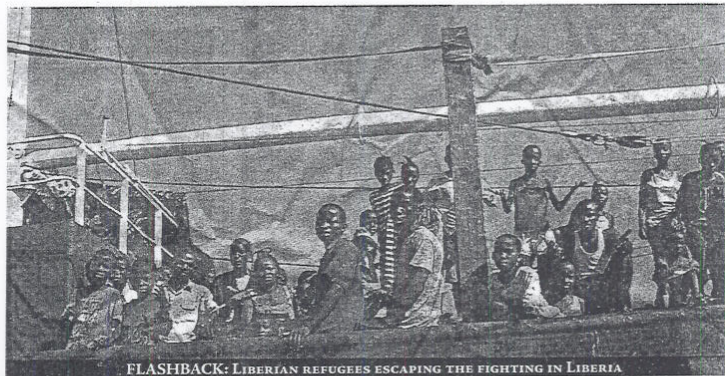
The tragedy is that long after the buffoons and killers are removed from the scene, their footprints of death, poverty, and chaos remain to hunt the innocent. Uganda is battling with life after Amin. Liberia is plagued with the Taylor disease, and may have to wait for a long time for life after him, particularly so when

and private properties, plundering Sierra Leone's diamonds and leaving scores of amputated orphans behind, thus rising from a penniless wanderer in West Africa to a man affording private medical treatment in France. A "god" that brings such a person into the company of presidents and prime ministers, blessing him in buying sprawling villas in France and other European countries, must be envied. Amin is resting in Saudi Arabia with his Allah. Is Rome or Jerusalem prepared to accept this "Christian?"

The irony comes when such a "god" blessed wealthy man, covered with fleets of expensive cars, swimming pools in a city with no water, concubines, 24-hour running generators in a dark country reminiscent of pre-colonial times, millions of dollars in safe keeping in European and other banks, keeps asking others to rescue his people from dying. If Liberians are dying, it is because he and his cronies are living royally, as indicated by charges that his Speaker of Parliament recently took US\$75,000 for a trip he did not make and over \$300,000 bill incurred by cronies in misusing public phone for private purposes. Liberia's forests are handled by his brother while key minerals are handled by trusted Americo-Liberian cronies.

charity must begin at home. If Taylor can afford medical treatments in some of the most expensive capitals of the world, there is no reason why he cannot inject his huge savings into saving his people from dying.

Liberians voted for him because he convinced them he was the wealthiest man in the country and proved this by throwing bundles of money at them, even if the money came from his cronies who looted banks of depositors' savings or from Sierra



FLASHBACK: LIBERIAN REFUGEES ESCAPING THE FIGHTING IN LIBERIA

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
14 May 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

No newspaper appear on the newsstand today due to the holiday (National Unification Day)

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 8:35 am)*

UN Envoy Warns Against Disturbing Liberia's Peace

- Speaking when she honoured the 7th UNMIL Senegalese Battalion, the Special Representative of the Secretary General to Liberia, Ellen Løj says UNMIL will not tolerate any disruptions in the current peace while it maintains peace in the country.
- Ms. Løj made reference to a recent armed clash in Maryland County between the people of Rock Town and Wetchoken that left two persons dead and dozens injured.
- The Senegalese Battalion is departing Liberia after five years of peacekeeping duties in the country and will be replaced by Ethiopian peacekeepers in the South-eastern County.
- Ms. Løj again reassured that the drawdown would be down cautiously and not in a hasty faction.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Taylor's Successor Takes Witness Stand in War Crimes Trial Today

- Former President Moses Z. Blah is expected to take the witness stand today at the Special Court for Sierra Leone currently sitting in The Hague, Netherlands, to give evidence in the trial of his former boss Charles Taylor. Moses Blah is expected to be called once Karmoh Kanneh completes his testimony.
- Blah considered a long-time associate of Taylor is expected to give evidence on circumstances leading to the murder of a known Sierra Leonean rebel commander, Sam Bockarie and wide range of events relating to Mr. Taylor's charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- Previously subpoenaed to appear last month, Mr. Blah told journalists at the time he could not go due to his health condition and the security of his family and himself.
- The former President said the Special Court threatened him with a seven-year imprisonment if he refused to testify.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Finance Dismisses 7 Employees

- A Ministry of Finance statement issued in Monrovia yesterday said seven employees of the Department of Revenue and Expenditure at the ministry have been dismissed with immediate effect.
- The statement said employees were dismissed for dishonesty in the performance of their duties.
- Those dismissed are Monnah Sarmie, Custom Supervisor assigned at the RIA Custom Warehouse, David Togbah, Custom Officer at the RIA Collectorate and Gabriel Yarkley, Custom Examiner at the RIA. Others are Roland Smith, Patricia Dixon, Jamil Davis and Esther Lumeh.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Bill to Ban Public Smoking and Drinking Introduced

- A proposed Act to ban the public use of tobacco and alcoholic substances has been introduced at the Senate.
- The bill if passed would extend the ban to schools, ministries, hospitals, vehicles and restaurants.
- It would also forbid the sale of tobacco and alcohol products to children under the age of eighteen years.

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Newspaper Summary

UN Envoy Honours Departing Senegalese Battalion serving in UNMIL

(The News)

- [sic]The UN Envoy in Liberia, Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, has commended the departing Seventh Senegalese Battalion in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), after five years of successful peacekeeping duties in Liberia. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) was speaking in southeastern Maryland County, bordering Cote d' Ivoire, when she awarded UN peacekeeping medals to the Senegalese, who will be replaced by Ethiopian peacekeepers. "While UNMIL is maintaining peace in Liberia, it will not allow any disruptions in the process," Ms. Løj assured Liberians, referring to a recent armed clash in the area, between the people of Rock Town and Wetchoken, which left two persons dead and dozens injured. The situation was quickly brought under control by the local authorities and Liberia National Police (LNP), with support from UN Police and UNMIL troops.

Man, 40, Re-arrested for Raping Nine-Year-Old Girl

(Heritage, The News)

- A 40-year-old man, Musa Solomon Fallah, has been re-arrested and detained the Monrovia Central Prison for allegedly raping a nine-year old girl in Clara Town in 2006, the National Human Rights Center of Liberia said Monday. The Criminal Court "A" rendered a guilty verdict last year and sentenced Fallah to life imprisonment, but the Supreme Court overturned the court's verdict and sent the case back to the lower court for retrial for what high court then referred to as "mistrial." While the case was being retried, Fallah was released in 2006 for 'failure' of the state to produce witnesses in court.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 8:35 am)*

President Sirleaf Wants Old Facilities at Ports Disposed Of

- Speaking during a tour of the Port of Buchanan, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf instructed the management of the National Port Authority (NPA) to bring down facilities no longer useful at various ports in the country.
- President Sirleaf said such facilities gave the ports a look of decay as opposed to the new look the government is envisaging.
- She encouraged the authorities of the NPA to look for buyers of the scrap and use the resources for the development of the ports.
- The Managing Director of the NPA, George Tubman assured that the scrapping process was ongoing and buyers were being sought.
- Meanwhile, Mr. Tubman has warned that the old ships at the port of Buchanan do not belong to the county in an apparent reaction to reports that there were plans to sell the vessels and use the resources to fight sea erosion in the county.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Blah Takes Witness Stand Tomorrow in the Trial of His Former Boss

- The trial of detained former President Charles Taylor is expected to take a “striking” trend tomorrow, Wednesday, when his former Vice President and ally take the witness stand.
- Former President Moses Blah considered a long-time associate of Taylor is in The Hague to face his former boss in the docket and is expected to testify on circumstances leading to the murder of a known Sierra Leonean rebel commander, Sam Bockarie. He will also give evidence on a wide range of events relating to Taylor’s charges of war crimes.

Liberia Seaport Police Nabs 30 Criminals in “Operations Spider Web”

- Speaking in an interview, the Director of the Liberia Seaport Police, Ashford Peal said it has arrested some 30 criminals since the launch of “Operation Spider Web” at the Freeport of Monrovia and vowed that the operations will continue to be enforced at the port to get rid of criminals.
- Col. Peal said the operations were done in collaboration with the Liberia National Police and UNMIL.

Former Solicitor General Wants Justice Minister Retract Statement against Judges

- Speaking at the opening of the May term of court yesterday, a former Solicitor General, Cllr. Theophilus Gould called on Justice Minister Philip Banks to retract his statement that the conduct of some judges is worst than armed robbery.
- This comes days after Justice Minister Banks in reaction to a not guilty verdict in the just-ended treason trial among other things dismissed as incompetent the Judge that presided over the case.
- Cllr. Gould said the statement was damaging and could undermine the credibility of the judiciary saying national security should not be used as a cover up for the legal inadequacies of any lawyer.

Postal Affairs Minister Clarifies Reports of US\$6M from UPU

- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia, the Minister of Post and Telecommunication, Jeremiah Sulonteh clarified that the US\$6 million mentioned by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) was not a cash amount.
- Minister Sulonteh said a technical team from the UPU recommended that Liberia needs US\$6 million to resuscitate the industry following a visit by the team to assess the post and telecommunications needs of the country.
- Meanwhile, the Minister said the UPU has removed all sanctions on Liberia following the country’s ratification of the UPU protocol.
