

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Thursday, 16 February 2012

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

Local News

YFN-SL Holds Symposium on Taylor Trial / *Standard Times* Page 3

Lumpa Community Gets Knowledge on the Legacy of Special Court / *Awoko Online* Page 4

International News

African Press Review / *RFI* Page 5

'Butcher of Bosnia' Mladic Goes on Trial for Serbian War Crimes in May / *Agence France Presse* Page 6

Sarajevo's Model Under Threat / *International Justice Tribune* Pages 7-8

Impunity in Syria – ICC Ready But Powerless / *Radio Netherlands Worldwide* Page 9

YFN-SL holds symposium on Taylor trial

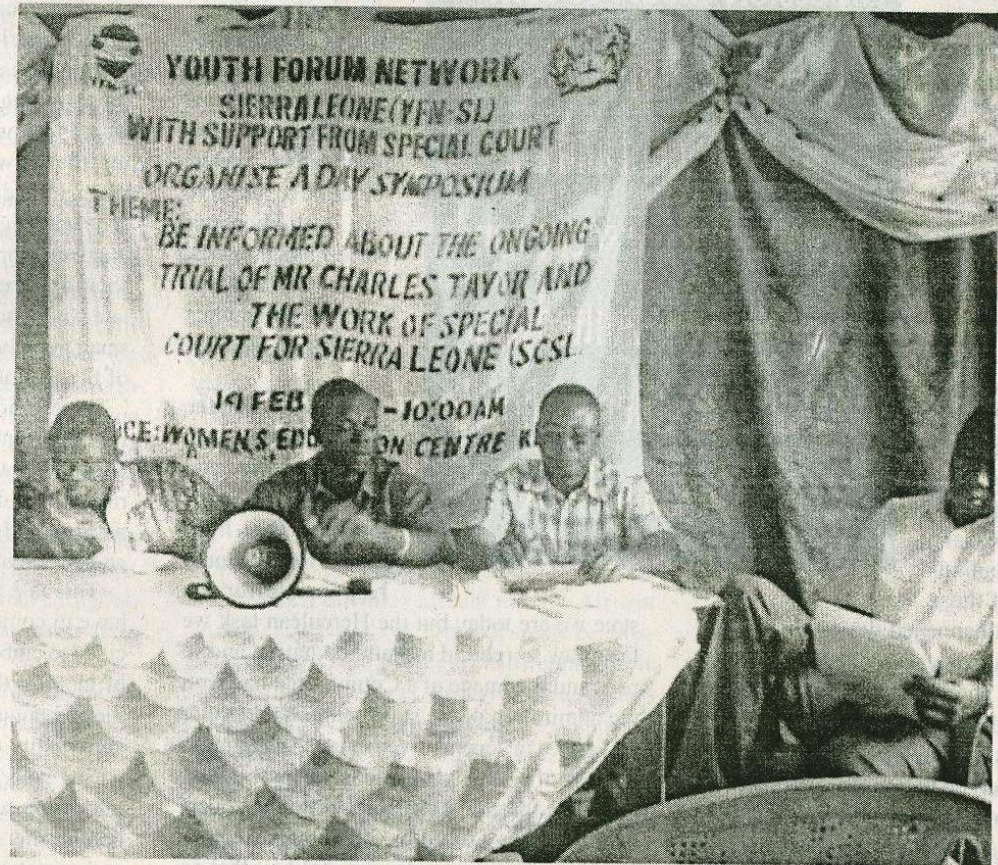
BY SAHR D. MATTURI

The Youth Forum Network Sierra Leone in a bid to ensure that the populace is being informed about the ongoing trial of Mr. Charles Taylor at the Hague and the work of the Special Court Sierra Leone (SCSL) on the 14th of February 2012 held a one day symposium at the Women Education Center, Grassfield in the eastern part of Freetown attracting participants from various secondary schools and major stakeholders from the Grassfield community on the theme "Be informed about the ongoing trial of Mr. Charles Taylor and the work of the Special Court Sierra Leone".

The Coordinator for the Youth Forum Network Sierra Leone Edmond Pratt appealed to the participants to transfer the message to their various communities.

Mohamed Kkanu of the National Youth Coalition (NYC) spoke on the role of youths in ensuring non violence in the elections and cited the negative views of young people which need to be transformed.

Mohamed Kanu added that young people need to be mindful and should aspire to



become leaders not to perpetrate violence. "It is now time for us to change our mindset", he admonished his audience.

Mr. Momodu Wudie the NYC Programme Officer expressed satisfaction with the YFN- SL and outlined the various charges against CHARLES TAYLOR includ-

ing the recruitment of child soldiers. He added that young people should not affiliate themselves with violence; the government he revealed in 2009 set the National Youth Commission in ensuring peace building and preventing conflict.

Mr. Joseph Dumbuya, the Site Project Consultant Spe-

cial Court for Sierra Leone Mr. Patrick Fatoma giving the update of the trial of CHARLES TAYLOR said that as the Special Court draws near to finishing its mandate in the mid to early 2012 it is time to begin talking about the legacy the court will leave for Sierra Leone and the international community.

Awoko Online

Thursday, 16 February 2012

Lumpa Community gets knowledge on the legacy of Special Court

Over one hundred participants including youth and elders were assembled at the Lumpa Community Centre over the weekend in a one-day symposium on communicating the legacies of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL).

The symposium was organized by the Youth Welfare and Development Organization (YWDO) in collaboration with SCSL as part of the court's outreach activities aimed at sensitizing the people on trails left by the Special Court as it legacies and for the community to refrain from violence and acts of impunity.

The SCSL Outreach Coordinator, Patrick Fatorma said that as the court draws near the finishing line of its mandate, it is important to begin talking about the legacy the court will leave for Sierra Leone and the International Community including cases trail.

Fatorma explained that the mandate was to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious crimes committed during the war in Sierra Leone. He said those crimes included crimes against humanity, serious violations of international law, attack against peace keepers and child recruitment and added that the conviction of persons for these heinous crimes also form part of the court's legacy.

Thirteen persons were indicted by the Court including the formal President of Liberia, Charles Taylor whose trail, he noted, is still ongoing at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Hague. He however emphasized that Mr. Taylor is still innocent until he found guilty by the court.

He explained that of the thirteen indicted persons, three of them, Hinga Norman, Foday Sankoh, and Sam Bokarie died during the cause of the prosecution saying that their indictments were therefore dropped as a result, while Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbow were convicted for 52 years, 40 years and 25 years respectively and are serving their jail terms in Rwanda.

He disclosed the court will also leave behind as part of its legacy a preservation of records and archives including memories of the experiences and testimonies of Sierra Leoneans during the war, as well as values and principles in the advancement of the rule of law and fair judicial proceedings.

It is expected that the legacies of the Special Court for Sierra Leone will enhance the fair delivery of justice for all in Sierra Leone as it will leave behind loads of reference materials to capacitate the country's judicial system.

By Emmanuella Kallon

RFI

Tuesday, 14 February

African press review 13 February 2012

Kenya's Daily Nation reports that the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone has rejected a request by lawyers representing former Liberian president Charles Taylor to reopen his defence case.

Judges unanimously ruled that the Taylor defence had failed to establish any justification for re-opening the case.

At the end of January, Taylor's defence team asked the court for permission to introduce pages from a UN report on the flow of Liberian mercenary groups into Cote d'Ivoire.

Taylor's lawyers argued that the report supports their argument that during the Sierra Leonean conflict, it was possible for fighters to cross from Liberia into Sierra Leone without being under the direction and control of Charles Taylor and without the implicit approval of the Government of Liberia.

Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law allegedly committed in the territory of Sierra Leone from November 1996 to January 2002.

He has denied all charges and has described the trial a conspiracy of Western countries.

Judgement is expected in June.

Agence France Presse

Thursday, 16 February 2012

'Butcher of Bosnia' Mladic goes on trial for Serbian war crimes in May

Bosnian Serb ex-army chief Ratko Mladic, who faces charges for his part in some of the worst atrocities in Europe since Second World War, will go on trial in May, a UN court said Wednesday.

Mladic, 69, faces war crimes court judges on 11 counts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in the 1990s Balkans conflict that claimed the lives of some 100,000 people.

"The trial shall commence on Monday, 14 May 2012, with the opening statement of the prosecution," the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) said in a document filed before the court.

This will be followed by an opening statement by the defence, if any, and by Mladic himself, "if he so wishes," The Hague-based court said, adding the trial proper will then start on May 29.

"We are ready for trial," Frederick Swinnen, special adviser to ICTY chief prosecutor Serge Brammertz told AFP.

Mladic was arrested in May last year in northeastern Serbia for his part in Bosnia's 1992-95 war after being on the run for 16 years.

The charges against the man referred to as "The Butcher of Bosnia" include genocide for masterminding the massacre at Srebrenica in July 1995 in which more than 7,000 Muslim men and boys were murdered over a six-day period.

Mladic is also accused in the 44-month siege of Sarajevo that started in May 1992 and claimed an estimated 10,000 lives.

The prosecution said forces under Mladic's command conducted a "campaign of terror" against civilians by shelling and sniping at them.

He is also charged for men under his command taking hostage over 200 UN peacekeepers and military observers, keeping them in strategic positions as protection against NATO airstrikes.

Mladic has pleaded not guilty.

During a hearing on December 8, he told the court: "I am sorry for every innocent that was killed on all sides, in all ethnic communities in Yugoslavia."

"In the name of peace and justice, I no longer want to hear the word 'war'," Mladic said.

The court initially announced the trial could start on March 27, but decided to give all parties more time.

© Copyright (c) The Montreal Gazette

International Justice Tribune

Wednesday, 15 February 2012

Sarajevo's model under threat

The international community has been urged to intervene, one more time, by President of the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Meddzida Kreso, to save the institution. It hosts the War Crimes Chamber, set up to try cases in Bosnia in accordance with practice at the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

By Nidzara Ahmetasevic, Sarajevo

Speaking on Bosnian television on February 2, Kreso said the international intervention was “necessary,” as Bosnian Serb politicians are trying to put a stop to the court, through a bill to be debated in parliament on February 16. But there is little chance this proposed legislation will be accepted, according to president of the constitutional commission at the State Parliament, Sefik Dzaferovic.

“Serious threat”

Nevertheless, the threat should be taken seriously, says former deputy prosecutor at the ICTY, David Tolbert. Currently president of the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), he called last Wednesday for the European Union to help a Court “under serious threat,” in an appeal published in *Balkan Insight*. “A sustained campaign to undermine the court’s work has included budget cuts, the stalling of the National War Crimes Strategy—a system envisaged to complete the majority of Bosnian war crimes cases within 15 years—and a relentless campaign of public attacks. This onslaught has now culminated in the demand by Republika Srpska’s parliament to have the court abolished”, Tolbert wrote. In its last annual report, Amnesty International confirmed how “verbal attacks on the justice system by high-ranking politicians further undermined the country’s efforts to prosecute war crimes cases”.

Furthermore, the ICTJ president believes it could be in the international community’s self-interest to save the Bosnian model, as “the War Crimes Chamber is widely recognised as a model of success in the ongoing discussion on how to ensure successful complementarity between national judiciaries and the International Criminal Court (ICC)”.

Kreso and Tolbert stress that, while the State Court was set up in 2004 by the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia and is supported by international donors, the court and the country itself have been dependent on international aid since the end of the war in 1995.

International judges have been working alongside locals at the War Crimes Chamber since 2005. Until the end of 2010, every chamber of the court was made up of 1 international and 2 local judges. Whereas the internationals were supposed to leave in December 2009 after a 5-year mandate, the OHR decided to keep them until the end of 2012 “to secure work on the war crimes prosecution.” Today, 1 international judge works alongside 12 local judges in the first instance war crimes cases. 3 other international judges work at the appeal chambers, where they also deal with organised crime and terrorism. Four international prosecutors are involved in war crimes cases.

Biased against Serbs?

But now, two political parties from Republika Srpska, the majority Bosnian Serb entity, propose that the State Parliament abandon the State Court and prosecution. They claim the court is biased against Serbs

and demand that war crimes be prosecuted by each entity as before. One of the parties is the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) of Radovan Karadzic, currently on trial at the ICTY. The other is the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), the ruling party .

The State Court was established in 2002 and started work in 2005 on war crimes cases. Since then, 79 final judgements have been issued for 110 people. Most of them were indicted for crimes against humanity or war crimes against civilians, while 26 were charged with genocide. The biggest case was against 11 former members of the Army of Republika Srpska, indicted for genocide at Srebrenica. 6 out of 11 were found guilty. According to official data in 2010, prosecutors were involved in 365 cases involving 1,165 persons.

However, the Court in Sarajevo has dealt with more cases than in any similar court in the region. According to Amnesty International, Croatia prosecutes on average fewer than 18 cases a year. In Serbia, Human Rights Watch concluded in its last yearly report that war crimes prosecutions have proceeded “steadily”, while the War Crimes Chamber faces “increasing criticism for limited progress” and indictments are being dropped due to lack of evidence.

Although a “National war crimes strategy” was adopted by Bosnia in 2008 to speed up the judicial process, so far it has hardly been implemented and the State Court faces an estimated backlog of more than 10, 000 war crimes cases. “This matter is not only about the court and the prosecutor’s office”, says Kreso. “This is in fact a hint towards a much more serious plan to abolish all other state-level institutions, such as the Justice Ministry, the Defence Ministry, and SIPA [State Information and Protection Agency].” Since the SDS and SNSD started their new campaign against the State Court, international officials in Bosnia have spoken out in support of the institution, but no concrete steps have followed.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Thursday, February 16, 2012

Impunity in Syria – ICC ready but powerless

By Richard Walker, The Hague

The UN Human Rights Chief says she is appalled by the ongoing violence in Syria. Yet there is no legal mechanism in place to address the problem.

Navi Pillay believes nothing short of targeting the current Syrian leaders will adequately address the crimes taking place in Syria. “Crimes against humanity are likely to have been committed in Syria. I have encouraged the Security Council to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court. All Member States must ensure that these crimes do not go unpunished. Yet these crimes continue to be committed as I speak,” she told the UN General Assembly in New York on Monday evening.

Without that referral from the five member Security Council (China and Russia blocked the move earlier this month), the ICC can do nothing. It cannot even say whether or not it is monitoring the Syria situation now in the event of a future UNSC resolution.

No jurisdiction

The International Criminal Court was established to help end impunity for crimes like those being committed in Syria. Yet the Court’s hands are tied by having highly limited jurisdiction to investigate and issue arrest warrants.

Following post-election violence in Kenya in 2008, the ICC Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo was able to start an investigation because Kenya had signed the Rome Statute, the treaty which created the ICC. Moreno Ocampo went ahead, in spite of strong resistance from the Kenyan government, which said it could deal with the allegations itself. Its Deputy Prime Minister now faces trial in The Hague for organising mass murder.

No signature, no trouble

But the fact remains that many states around the world can get away with brutal suppression, like the one currently playing out in Syria, by relying on politics to prevent ICC action. “You have a situation where a political body can prevent the Court from carrying out its core mandate, to stem impunity for serious crimes,” Lorraine Smith, from the ICC monitoring and outreach program, told RNW.

ICC failing?

But for many who created the ICC there is good reason for the Rome Statute being written this way. “The fact is that countries are sovereign, and you did not want to have a situation where you would have an errant prosecutor who was able to intervene in national affairs”, said Lorraine Smith.

“It might appear to be a failing of the ICC that in the case of countries which have not signed the Rome Statute, the ICC can only stand by and look...[but] that’s not a failing of the court. It’s a failing of the international community that has not established a system that allows the Court to step in when it needs to without first getting the go-ahead [from politicians].”

The Assad government in Syria is even more unenthusiastic than Kenya was about the ICC looking for those responsible for the estimated 7,000 killed so far during Syria’s uprising. Until the referral structure of the Court changes, such instances of impunity will continue.