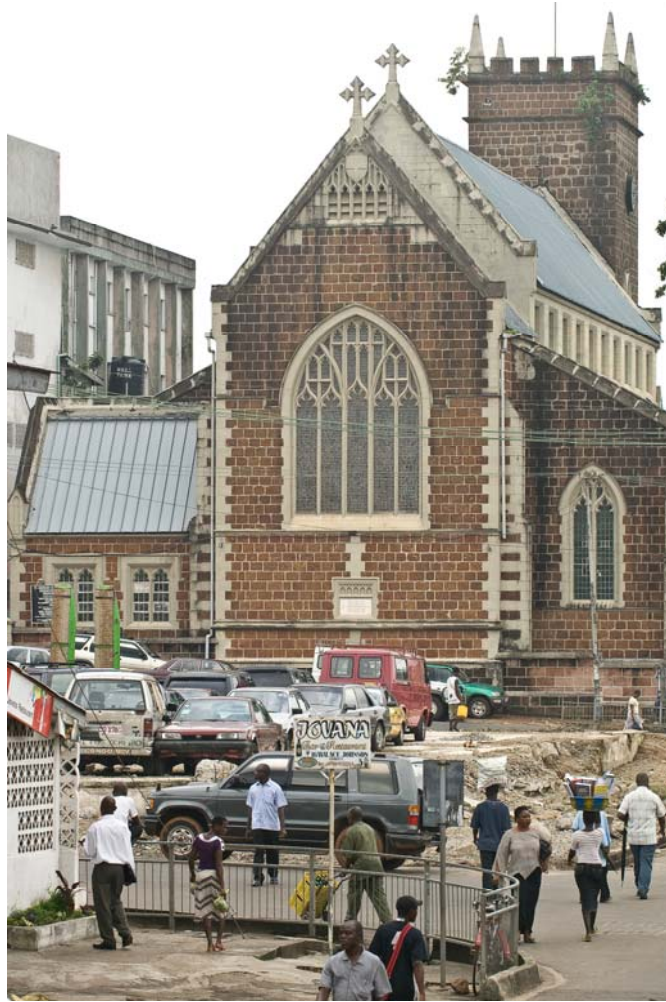


**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Rear view of St. George's Cathedral

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:

Wednesday, 16 September 2009

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

Wednesday, 16 September 2009

Taylor Supported Kono Attack

-Prosecution Witness Reveals

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Continued page 2

Taylor Supported Kono Attack

From front page

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The prosecution claimed that Mr. Taylor who was then rebel leader in 1992 provided 50 boxes of the ammunition to capture of the town of Kono. The Prosecution said Mr. Taylor and RUF rebel Leader, Foday Sankoh arranged the capture of Kono in Liberia.

But Mr. Taylor described the Prosecution evidence as hearsay. The Prosecution evidence further alleged that Mr. Taylor was not sincere in his cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS to restore peace to Sierra Leone.

A Prosecution witness only identified by a pseudonym for security reason claimed last year that Mr. Taylor sent a helicopter loaded with ammunition to the RUF immediately after the Lome Peace Accord in 1999.

The Lome Peace Accord was signed between the RUF and the Sierra Leone Government in 1999 under the supervision of

ECOWAS. The witness alleged that Mr. Taylor sent Sam Bockarie and Junta leader, Johnny Paul Koroma out of Monrovia with a helicopter loaded with ammunition.

The Indicted Former Liberian Leader denied that ammunition was on board the helicopter. The prosecution alleged that in addition to the ammunition, Mr. Taylor gave Johnny Paul Koroma and Sam Bockarie 15-thousand United States Dollars. But Mr. Taylor said the envelop that he gave to the two rebel leaders and their fighters contained about ten thousand United States Dollars, and he had no ulterior motive.

Also read this story on www.exclusivepress.net

Sierra Express Media
 Wednesday, 16 September 2009

Taylor Provided Arms to RUF Rebels for Diamonds

By John Kollie

The Prosecution has, consistently claimed that it was Charles Taylor's desire for diamonds that inflamed the Sierra Leone war. The Prosecution further alleged that Mr. Taylor provided arms to the RUF Rebels for diamonds. A Prosecution Witness only identified TF1-567 alleged last year that the Former Liberian Leader played a dubious role in the Sierra Leone war. Mr. Taylor denied the Prosecution allegation. John Kollie has this transcribed report for the BBC World Service Trust...

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The Indicted Former Liberian Leader



Charles Taylor at the Hague

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Awareness Times

Wednesday, 16 September 2009

If he was asked to do it all over again...

Special Court Prosecutor would now prefer to Strengthen our National Judiciary than spend all that money prosecuting at the Special Court

Ambassador Stephen Rapp is the man now trusted by President Barack Obama to be America's Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes. In his first international exclusive interview granted since then, Ambassador Stephen Rapp has made it categorically clear that he now feels that money spent on prosecuting at the Special Court for Sierra Leone would have been better served if it had been used to strengthen the National Judiciary.

In the interview, whilst responding to questions on Sierra Leone, Ambassador Rapp stated that if he were to do it all over again, those millions of dollars would better serve in building up better Court systems in the country.

It will be recalled that in his final press conference called here in Freetown before he left last month, Rapp had made an astute observation that the Sierra Leone Judiciary was seriously under-resourced; a fact that many people associated with the judicial sector will readily agree with. There have been admirable steps taken so far by the current Chief Justice Umu-Hawa Tejan-Jalloh to rebuild confidence in the Judiciary which steps have mostly enjoyed the full support of Koroma Executive such as the ongoing setting-up of Commercial Courts by the ICF (See Pages 8 & 9); but as a recent Op-Ed piece stated, even if *Mother Theresa* was appointed as the Chief Justice of Sierra Leone, the Judiciary will still fail to achieve its laudable objectives if it lacked political and civil support to ensure the Judiciary was both well-funded and independently operated from Executive arm of Government; with no interference.

The full text of the TIME International's Magazine interview which was published this Monday September 14th 2009, is reproduced here-below for our local readers.

Stephen Rapp: Obama's Point Man on War Crimes

By Sulakshana Gupta (TIME Magazine)

Monday, Sep. 14, 2009

As chief prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Stephen Rapp witnessed many firsts, including the first ever convictions for the recruitment of child soldiers and the first convictions for sexual slavery and forced marriages as crimes against humanity. Now he's joining the Obama Administration as ambassador-at-large for war-crimes issues and taking his pursuit of justice to the rest of the world.

Why does the U.S. need an ambassador-at-large for war-crimes issues?

This position was established during the second term of the Clinton Administration. [It] was particularly needed in the '90s, when we saw the beginning of international criminal tribunals for the first time since Nuremberg, with the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and then the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, both with the support of the U.S. This office focused on coordinating the cooperation that these tribunals needed to bring people to trial.

The U.S. is yet to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). How does your appointment further U.S. involvement with the ICC and international law?

The decision about the ICC treaty has to be made by the President of the U.S. In 2002, Congress passed the American Service Member's Protection

Act that prohibited U.S. cooperation in the ICC in many areas. [There was a fear that U.S. soldiers could be targeted in politically motivated prosecutions.] But it also included a provision that U.S. authorities could cooperate to bring to trial individuals like [former Yugoslav President] Slobodan Milosevic. I think you can expect that the current Administration won't go back on what the second Bush Administration did after 9/11 with regards to unsigning the ICC treaty.

So the U.S. does not want its own citizens to be held accountable for crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq?

In my point of view, if there were acts of torture, they violated American law because America ratified the U.N Convention Against Torture. If we were part of the ICC, we would be expected to investigate these issues, and if there were a strong case, you would expect prosecution. That's what the U.S. is doing anyway. We respect one of the guiding principles of the ICC that the international court has jurisdiction that is secondary to the national court. Whether we are part of the ICC or not, we will conduct ourselves so that no prosecutor at the international level would ever have cause to take up a case against an American citizen.

Which countries do you hope to focus on?

There are situations that have already been handed to us. There is a report from the Department of State on the war in Sri Lanka due in Congress [on Sept. 21]. Additionally, the office, together with the Secretary for Global Affairs and the Secretary of

State, has the responsibility to collect information on ongoing atrocities, and it is then the responsibility of the President to determine what steps might be taken towards justice. Like the canary in the coal mine, we give the signal that something very serious is occurring.

Do the requirements of peace get in the way of justice?

I think we've learned that contrary to fears, holding people accountable for atrocities does not make the problem worse — it makes it better. When Milosevic was indicted for ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, people were convinced that they would never have peace and he would be worse than ever. Within a short time he was charged and jailed in his own country. In Sierra Leone there was a peace agreement that gave the rebels amnesty, but that was not genuine peace. When the government said they needed to try those that bore the greatest responsibility, that's what hastened the end of that conflict. Justice is a necessary ingredient to the establishment of peace. There's always an argument that justifies doing nothing, but you can't defer it forever.

What problems came up in the pursuit of international justice in Sierra Leone?

The concern all of us had was that we were conducting justice in a comfortable courtroom with long trials and well-paid attorneys. Prisoners had single cells, and they had committed the worst crimes. A mile away in the local prison there were simply no resources. Cases can't go forward, witnesses are lost, and people stay in detention for many years at a stretch. [If I was] to do it over, I would try to develop a court within the national system. That would be my preference. Maybe not a court that costs \$30 million a year like the Special Court, but an appropriate court.

Does your remit restrict you to conflict zones, or can you focus on human-rights abuses in places like Burma and North Korea?

My job deals with atrocities, genocide and war crimes. Human rights and international humanitarian law are closely related, but my focus is on the latter. I'll be working not just with new developments and existing courts but also unhealed wounds created by past atrocities, in Cambodia for instance.

With [special envoy] Scott Gration in Sudan and now you, is there a trend toward diplomatic engagement with war criminals and the systems that shield them?

We want genocide to stop but also want the conflict to stop. Issues like contact with governments that have committed these crimes always come up. We should have no nonessential contact with indicted individuals. It is preferable to meet with people who are not accused, but sometimes you need to have that contact. There are different approaches that can be taken, but working that out is something I look forward to doing.

The Senator

Wednesday, 16 September 2009

Charles Taylor Rebutts Prosecution Evidence for Role in Salone Conflict

special report

Charles Taylor last week made efforts to refute the evidence of key prosecution witnesses against him, including allegations that he made a pact with Sierra Leone's rebel leader to help each other in their respective wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

He also rebuffed as "lies" prosecution evidence that he ordered the execution of a key Sierra Leonean rebel commander or that he had a common plan with Sierra Leonean and Gambian rebel leaders to destabilize West Africa.

On Monday, Mr. Taylor told the Special Court for Sierra Leone that he did not have any pact with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels to help each other out with their respective wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

"I had no pact with RUF leader Foday Sankoh for mutual assistance. That could not have been necessary," Mr. Taylor said during his trial in The Hague.

Mr. Taylor asserted that if such mutual pact ever existed between himself and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh, the prosecution would have led evidence to show the assistance that Mr. Sankoh rendered to Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

"There has been no evidence in this court about Sankoh being involved in the conflict in Liberia or commanding an NPFL post. There was no such thing because I did not know him at this time," he said.

Mr. Taylor was responding to questions from his defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, about allegations that while in Libya in the late 1980s, Mr. Taylor entered into an agreement with Mr.

Sankoh for the RUF rebels to assist the NPFL during its initial war efforts in Liberia in exchange for Mr. Taylor's assistance to the RUF in attacking Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor denied that this was ever the case. The accused former president reiterated his earlier position that while he was in Libya, he did not know about the existence of the RUF and that he did not meet with Mr. Sankoh.

"I did not know about the creation of the RUF in 1989. I did not know Foday Sankoh. I only knew Alie Kabbah and the Sierra Leone Pan African Movement," he said.

On Tuesday, Mr. Taylor said that he did not order or know about an infamous operation launched by rebel forces in Sierra Leone during its civil war aiming to ensure that anything that had life must be killed.

"I was not aware of 'Operation No Living Thing'," Mr. Taylor said.

During the presentation of the prosecution's case, witnesses testified that Mr. Taylor worked in concert with RUF and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebels to plan "Operation No Living Thing" against the Sierra Leonean population.

"I did not instruct anybody to launch such an operation. I had no control over anybody in Sierra Leone. There is no way that I would be in control or even acquiesce in any type of situation of this sort when throughout the revolution in Liberia we never had these kinds of atrocities, so this is impossible," Mr. Taylor said.

On Wednesday and Thursday, Mr. Taylor focused on refuting the testimonies of key prosecution witnesses who testified that he had plans to destabilize West Africa and that he ordered the execution of RUF Commander Sam Bockarie for fear that Mr. Bockarie had too much knowledge



of his involvement with the RUF -- information which the witnesses said Mr. Taylor was determined to protect.

Between February 8 to 11 2008, the Prosecution's eleventh witness, a Gambian named Suwandi Camara, testified that that Mr. Taylor, together with RUF leader Foday Sankoh, and a Gambian rebel leader named Dr. Manning, met in Burkina Faso and developed a common plan to destabilize West Africa.

The witness also testified that Mr. Taylor recruited and armed children under the age of 15 years. (Mr. Camara was a linkage witness who said he was trained alongside Mr. Taylor in Libya and later became part of Mr. Taylor's Special Security Service (SSS)).

In his testimony on Wednesday, Mr. Taylor denied ever knowing the Suwandi Camara and dismissed as "lies" the witness' claims that Mr. Taylor had plans to destabilize West Africa. "There was no such thing like this that occurred," Mr. Taylor said.

Asked by Mr. Griffiths whether he did "coordinate such a movement with Dr. Manning and Foday Sankoh," Mr. Taylor said no. He elaborated that "there was not one Sierra Leonean, not one Sierra Leonean in Burkina Faso. The only people that were in Burkina Faso were the Gambians and Dr. Manning had come to Burkina Faso not along with the Liberian group."

In his testimony in February, Witness Camara claimed that he was a training instructor for the NPFL at the Gbartala training base in Liberia and that under his command; the NPFL recruited and trained young children who were under the age of 15 years. Mr. Taylor told the judges that "that was a blatant lie and there will be witnesses to prove that it is a lie."

Explaining the role that children played in NPFL territory, Mr. Taylor said "people that were under the age of 18 were not trained as military personnel in the NPFL. They were family members associated with soldiers that helped to take care of them in their home, cooking for them, but they were not recruits of the NPFL. They did not have any command structure. If you have a bigger brother, you follow him, you were with him, but there was no fixed command structure of any group calling themselves SBU[Small Boys Unit]."

The prosecution has alleged that Mr. Taylor maintained a relationship with RUF rebels throughout the conflicts in both Sierra Leone and Liberia. Together with the RUF's leader, Foday Sankoh, Mr. Taylor allegedly developed

a common plan to wage war against the people and government of Sierra Leone. Prosecution witnesses have testified to the pattern of operations in Mr. Taylor's NPFL such as the use of child soldiers called SBUs, and have related the same patterns in the RUF where the child combatants were also called SBUs. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

On Thursday, Mr. Taylor said he did not order the the assassination of one of Sierra Leone's top rebel commanders during the country's civil war, and dismissed as "lies" allegations that he knew that Sierra Leonean rebels were recruiting fighters in Liberia in areas controlled by Mr. Taylor's own fighting force.

Mr. Taylor was responding to the testimony of the 37th Prosecution Witness, an RUF insider and mining commander who testified under protective measures, using the pseudonym TFI-367. In his testimony from August 20 to September 1 2008, Witness TFI-367 explained that a relative of Sam Bockarie's wife had told him that Mr. Taylor ordered the assassination of the RUF commander and his entire family because Mr. Taylor was concerned that Mr. Bockarie knew too much about his involvement with the RUF. In order to protect such information, Mr. Bockarie and his entire family had to be killed.

In his response on Thursday, Mr. Taylor said that "it is the silliest thing that I have heard. What will Bockarie have to say about me? That I was giving arms to RUF? If this is true, he would have said so to Foday Sankoh when he returned from custody in 1999."

"What is there to hide that he would not have told his boss that I will have to kill him for many years later?" Mr. Taylor asked.

"I did not order the killing of Sam Bockarie," he maintained.

Several prosecution witnesses have testified that when RUF leader Foday Sankoh was detained in Nigeria in 1997, he gave orders to Sam Bockarie that all diamonds mined on behalf of the RUF were to be handed over to Mr. Taylor for safe keeping. Witnesses also said that Mr. Sankoh told RUF commanders to take all orders from Mr. Taylor.

In his testimony, Mr. Taylor questioned why Mr. Bockarie had not mentioned anything in his report to Mr. Sankoh about diamonds given to, or orders received from, Mr. Taylor after Mr. Sankoh's release in 1999.

"Except they were ungrateful people but he [Bockarie] would have told Sankoh. As a good commander on the ground, he is supposed to give a full report to his boss," Mr. Taylor said. Mr. Taylor also refuted Witness TFI-367's testimony that RUF leader Foday Sankoh was recruiting fighters for the RUF in NPFL controlled territories in Liberia and that Mr. Sankoh was making public pronouncements in Liberia about Mr. Taylor's support to the RUF. The witness claimed that he was personally recruited by Mr. Sankoh in Liberia and that he was trained alongside other RUF commanders like Issa Sesay and Morris Kallon at Camp Nama in Liberia. Mr. Taylor dismissed the witness' claims as lies.

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

Tuesday, 15 September 2009

The sponsorship of another RUF operation, Fiti Fata, by Accused Former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been challenged by the Defence Team. Mr. Taylor denied that his government had a death squad headed by Former Secret Service Officer, Zigzah Marzah. The Defence Team also pointed out some inconsistencies in a Prosecution witness' testimonies about Mr. Taylor's mobile phone number. And was Former Special Security Service Director, Benjamin Yeaten more powerful than Charles Taylor's Vice President? John Kollie transcribes reports from The Hague for the BBC World Service Trust...

The ammunition used in the RUF Fiti-Fata Operation in the Sierra Leone town of Buedu came from Charles Taylor's farm, a prosecution witness alleged in his testimonies last year. According to the witness, Fiti-Fata was an operation without specific target. The witness said the ammunition was loaded onto a pickup at Mr. Taylor's farm house in Bong County. The Prosecution evidence also accused the Former Liberian Leader of operating a death squad commanded by one of the Secret Service Officers, Zig Zag Marzah.

A Prosecution witness claimed that Former SSS Director, Benjamin Yeaten ordered the commander of Taylor's death squad in 2002 to lead a raid on the Belle Forest in Liberia. former president Taylor denied all these claims calling them made up lies. Mr. Taylor denied the existence of a death squad in his government.

Another Prosecution witness alleged that he was in regular communication with Mr. Taylor on the mobile phone. Mr. Taylor's mobile number is 06510547, the witness declared. To this claim, Mr. Taylor maintains denial.

Former Special Security Service Director, Benjamin Yeaten was the second most powerful person in Mr. Taylor's government, a prosecution witness told the court last year. The witness said Mr. Taylor personally told a frontline meeting at the Executive Mansion that whatever Benjamin Yeaten said or did came from him. (Taylor)

The Prosecution witness alleged that Benjamin Yeaten was more powerful than Vice President Moses Blah.

The witness said Benjamin yeaten had a special parking space at Mr. Taylor's residence. He said the Vice President was not allowed to park in Yeaten's space.

But Mr. Taylor denied that Former SSS Director Benjamin Yeaten was the second in command during his presidency.

John Kollie

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Tuesday, 15 September 2009

Liberia: Nobody Ever Transported Weapons From Taylor's White Flower Residence To RUF Rebels in Sierra Leone, He Says

Alpha Sesay

Weapons were never transported from Charles Taylor's White Flower residence in Monrovia for use by rebel forces in Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor told the Special Court for Sierra Leone today.

"Nobody ever picked up weapons from White Flower. Nobody ever picked up a single weapon there, not even Benjamin Yeaten," the accused former Liberian president said during his testimony today.

Mr. Taylor was responding to the testimony the 33rd Prosecution Witness TFI-375, who in his June 2008 testimony said that while working with Mr. Taylor's Special Security Services (SSS) Director, Benjamin Yeaten, in Liberia, he picked up arms and ammunition on several occasions from Mr. Taylor's White Flower residence in Monrovia. TFI-375 testified that he then transported the weapons to Sierra Leone for use by Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels.

The witness had also testified that while in Sierra Leone in 1997, a Liberian rebel called Jungle took weapons for use by RUF rebels when he visited RUF commander, Sam Bockarie. The witness said Jungle told him he had picked up the weapons from Mr. Taylor's White Flower residence in Liberia and in return, Mr. Bockarie had given him diamonds to take to Mr. Taylor.

In his testimony today, Mr. Taylor dismissed the witness' account as lies.

"I say he is lying. He must be confused. How could I, as president of Liberia, take ammunition and give it to him?" Mr. Taylor asked. "I have nothing else to do as president but to take some ammunition like a shop boy and give it to him to take to Sierra Leone? In fact, White Flower does not exist in 1997. I moved into that building in January 1998," the accused former president said.

Mr. Taylor explained that because of the presence of Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeepers in Liberia at that time, it would have been impossible for anyone to transport huge loads of ammunition from Liberia to Sierra Leone in big trucks.

"If ammunition is crossing from Liberia to Sierra Leone in a truck, ECOMOG must have carried it. Note that there were 18,000 ECOMOG soldiers in Liberia at this time," he said.

Mr. Taylor also denied knowing Jungle who, according to Witness TFI-375, was part of Mr. Taylor's close protection unit as well as liaison between Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bockarie.

"There is no such person called Jungle in the Close Protection Unit," Mr. Taylor said. "When I needed Bockarie in 1998, I sent for him. There is no liaison like Jungle. We'll contact him by radio when we needed him," the former president added.

Witness TFI-375, in his June 2008 testimony, also said that he was part of a team that took arms and ammunition from Mr. Taylor's private farm at Gbangha in 1998 and transported them to RUF commander, Superman, in Buedu. The witness testified that these weapons were used by the RUF for "Operation Fiti

Fata," an operation he said was launched to capture the diamond-rich town of Kono. Mr. Taylor today denied having any arms storage on his private farm at Gbangha.

"If any president can make his farm or residence an arms depot, then the Secret Service should not even exist," he said.

Mr. Taylor also denied the witness's assertion that he had direct numbers for Mr. Taylor's cell and satellite phones while he worked with Benjamin Yeatan in Liberia.

"That is the biggest lie I have ever heard. There is no cell phone number that the witness had. Even cabinet members did not have my cell phone number. It was the only protected number in Liberia," Mr. Taylor said.

Also in his testimony today, Mr. Taylor denied ever knowing the Prosecution's 21st Witness Joseph Marzah, a.k.a. "Zig Zag" Marzah, who in his testimony said he was the Chief of Operations for Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and head of the Death Squad of the Mr. Taylor's SSS that was headed by Benjamin Yeaten. Also in his testimony in 2008, Mr. Marzah said that he sat together with Mr. Taylor and feasted upon human intestines.

"I first saw Marzah in this court. I did not know him personally. I did not recognize him when I first saw him in court," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also disputed the assertion that Mr. Marzah was a Colonel in the SSS. Describing Mr. Marzah today, Mr. Taylor said that "Marzah ends up being an Orderly to Yeaten. A Colonel? I doubt that very much. An Orderly who cannot even read and write? I doubt that very much."

Mr. Taylor is responding to allegations that he provided support to RUF rebels in Sierra Leone through the supply of arms and ammunition and that he helped plan RUF operations, thus helping the rebels commit atrocities against the government and people of Sierra Leone. He has denied all the allegations against him.

Mr. Taylor's testimony continues tomorrow.

UN News

Tuesday, 15 September 2009

Security Council extends UN presence in Liberia, Sierra Leone

The Security Council today extended the mandates for one year of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Liberia and the world body's peacebuilding office in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

In its unanimously-adopted resolution on the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the Council authorized the force to assist the West African nation with the 2011 general presidential and legislative polls by, among other measures, facilitating access to remote areas.

The 15-member body also endorsed Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's recommendation to implement the third state of UNMIL's drawdown, made in his most recent report on the mission.

In that publication, he proposed that the Council authorize the continuation of UNMIL's troop strength of nearly 8,000 until after the 2011 polls, following which the drawdown "resume at an accelerated pace," he wrote.

UNMIL was set up in 2003 to bolster a ceasefire agreement ending a war that killed almost 150,000 Liberians, mostly civilians, and sent 850,000 others fleeing to neighbouring countries. As of the end of July, the mission comprised over 11,500 uniformed personnel, more than 1,300 police, nearly 500 international civilian personnel, almost 1,000 local staff and over 200 UN Volunteers (UNV).

On Sierra Leone, the Council emphasized that the West African nation's Government "bears primary responsibility for peacebuilding, security and long-term development.

For its part, the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) should continue mobilizing international support for the country, which is rebuilding after a brutal civil war that tore it between 1996 and 2001.

In Mr. Ban's latest report on UNIPSIL, he underscored that greater efforts are needed by all Sierra Leoneans to build on the momentum generated by the signing of a key peace pact that led to the cessation of political violence earlier this year.

Measures taken to implement the 2 April communiqué signed by the governing All People's Congress (APC) and the opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) "have enabled the strengthening of the peace consolidation process in Sierra Leone," he said.

Last August, the Security Council authorized the creation of UNIPSIL to replace the UN political office in the country, known as UNIOSIL, and gave it an initial mandate of 12 months.



UNMIL Photo/Christopher Herwig, April 17, 2009, Buchanan, Grand Bassa, Liberia -Private Linda Mensah, one of the 41 female members serving with Ghanbat 10 with UNMIL in Buchana on patrol about the Liberian Port City of Buchanan.

UNIPSIL, which works closely with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, is tasked with providing political support to national and local efforts for identifying and resolving tensions and threats of potential conflict. It also monitors and promotes human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law, including efforts to counter transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.

Sierra Leone is one of the first two countries, along with Burundi, to receive support from the Commission, which was established in 2005 to help post-conflict countries determine the priority areas for rebuilding out of the vast array of challenges they face.

Iso on the Council's agenda today was a briefing on developments in Darfur by Austrian Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting, the chair of the Sanctions Committee for Sudan.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 15 September 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia says senior Indian official to pay first visit in 40 years

MONROVIA, Sept. 15 (Xinhua) -- An senior Indian official will pay a visit this week to Liberia, the first of its kind in the past four decades, according to the Foreign Ministry of the West African country. The chief spokesperson of the Liberian Foreign Ministry, Josephus Moses Gray, who is an assistant minister for press and public affairs, told Xinhua on Monday that Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Dr. Shashi Tharoor will arrive in Liberia at the head of an 18-man delegation. The visit will be the first in 40 years by a senior official of the government of India to post-war Liberia, which is playing host to thousands of Indians investors, the spokesperson said. The Indian state minister will hold talks with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and other senior officials of the government, the official disclosed. These talks, Gray said, would foster and cement the already cordial ties between the two countries. Several agreements may be reached during the stay of Dr. Tharoor and his delegation.

Liberian president says engagement with Guinea Junta only for peaceful transition

MONROVIA, Sept. 15 (Xinhua) -- Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is cautioning her colleagues of the West African region that the engagement with the military junta of Guinea should be oriented only for the peaceful transition in that country. The president made the point on Monday after a visit to Guinea accompanied by her Senegalese counterpart Abdoulaye Wade over the weekend. President Sirleaf's spokesman told local reporters at her office that regional leaders should engage the junta led by Capt. Dedis Camara on the way forward for peace and a peaceful and smooth transition in the up-coming elections. Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Wleh Badio said both Sirleaf and Wade met the Guinean military leader to confer with him on the future of the country.

Liberia Interested in Cameroon's Community Forestry Policy

Sep 15, 2009 (Cameroon Tribune/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- A delegation from that country visited Cameroon recently to get abreast with the said policy. A fourteen-man delegation from Liberia was recently drilled on the council and community forest policy and legislature evaluation in Cameroon. The Liberia delegation was headed by the Technical Manager in the Department of Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Moses B. Wogbeh. The eight-day working visit which ended on August 15 exposed the Liberian delegation to the process of implementing Community Forest initiatives, including the challenges encountered and solutions. The visit, facilitated by the World Resources Institute (WRI)-Cameroon National Coordinator, Gideon Neba, involved various stops in different parts of the country. The theoretical part of the visit was in the Mvog-Betsi Zoological Garden, where the delegation among others, met and discussed with the forestry staff of MINFOF. The **Liberians** were told to judiciously apply in their Sinoe and Nimba Counties, the knowledge they acquired.

International Clips on West Africa **Sierra Leone**

Taylor Did Not Command RUF To Release UN Hostages, Only Conveyed A Message From The International Community, He Says

Sep 15, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Charles Taylor did not command Sierra Leonean rebel commander Issa Sesay to release the United Nations hostages, but rather conveyed the message of the international community that the peacekeepers had to be released unconditionally, he said today. "Its a lie. I did not command him. The only thing I did on the UN situation was to tell Issa Sesay to release those people and to release them unconditionally," Mr. Taylor said. I told him the concerns of the international community and that if they did not release the peacekeepers, the international community will come down on them like a hammer." Mr. Taylor was responding to the testimony of a prosecution witness, whose identity was not released because he testified under protective measures. The greater details of the witness's testimony were discussed in private session.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf Lifts Education Ministry Officials Suspension

(Heritage, The News, The Inquirer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has lifted the week-long suspension of Education Minister, Dr. Joseph Korto, and two of his deputies.
- President Sirleaf suspended the Minister and his two deputies, James E. Roberts and Hester Williams for their failure to properly monitor the situation at the E. Jonathan Goodridge High School in the Barnersville suburb.
- The President at the time accused the officials of complicity in allowing the students to learn under deplorable conditions.
- Meanwhile, media reports say it appears that President Sirleaf is poised to take further action at the Ministry of Education.
- Addressing a news conference yesterday, Presidential Press Secretary, Cyrus Badio said the President would continue to monitor the performance of the Education Ministry in order to take further action aimed at making the Ministry more effective and efficient.

Vocal Critic of Government Somersaults...Vows not to Criticize Government Again

(The Inquirer, The Informer, The News, Heritage, Daily Observer)

- The Superintendent-designate of Sinoe County, Milton Teahjay said he would no longer criticize Government but instead consult President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on crucial matters.
- Speaking at a confirmation hearing, Mr. Teahjay who before now was a vocal critic of Government, vowed to change his mode of approach in addressing national issues.
- The Sinoe County Superintendent-designate is considered a "controversial" figure in society and his nomination to the post has sparked mixed reaction amongst his kinsmen.
- While one group of citizens, including members of the Legislative Caucus, has opposed Teahjay's appointment another group has fully supported his appointment.

Government, Media To Hold Conference to Discuss Stand-off

(The Inquirer, Heritage)

- The office of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has disclosed that it's planning to hold a meeting with the Liberian media aimed at discussing and finding a common ground on the war of words that had ensued between the media and the government.
- Over the weekend, Information Minister, Laurence Bropleh ordered press houses in the country should not print newspapers were not registered with ministry.

- Addressing the Executive Mansion weekly press briefing, Presidential Press Secretary, Cyrus Badio however said the President will not endorse any arbitrary action against the Liberian media.
- He said the President is against any decision that undermines freedom of expression and Press, in an apparent reference to the mandate by the Information Minister to commercial printers.

Top Indian Official Due in The Country Tomorrow

(The Inquirer)

- The Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr. Shashi Tharoor at a head of an 18-man delegation is due in the country tomorrow.
- Sources from the Executive Mansion and the Indian Consulate in Liberia say Dr. Tharoor will be the first senior official of the Indian Government to visit Liberia in 40 years.
- While in the country, the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs is expected to hold talks with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Vice President, Joseph N. Boakai and selected Cabinet ministers.
- He is also expected to meet the Indian Community including Indian Peace Keepers serving with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

African Partnership Station in Medical Outreach in Bomi County

(The News, The Informer)

- The Africa Partnership Station (APS) of the United States navy has begun offering medical services to residents of Bomi County.
- During the operation the APS identified eye problem as a prevalent medical condition among the people of Bomi.
- The Head of the APS Medical team in Bomi, Commander Lloyd Burgess said the team for the past 6 days has treated over 600 eye patients in the county and is also handling other medical-related cases like malaria, toothache and child-related diseases. The APS Medical team is expected to end its services at the Liberia Government Hospital in Tubmanburg on Wednesday.

Gender Gives Women Groups over US\$57,000 Loan

(The Inquirer)

- Over 47 women groups across Montserrado County over the weekend received over US\$57,000 loan assistance provided them by the Women Division of the Ministry of Gender.
- The loan to the women groups is intended to empower them economically as part of the ministry's efforts in the implementation of its post colloquium activities.
- According to the Ministry of Gender Women Division under the loan assistance programme it hopes to increase the capacity for entrepreneurship amongst rural and urban women.

Local Media – Star Radio (*News Monitored today at 09:00 am*)

President Sirleaf Seeks Legal Opinion on Threshold Bill

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has reportedly forwarded the threshold bill to the Justice Ministry for legal opinion because of constitutional issues raised by some lawmakers.
- Several lawmakers including Bhofal Chambas of the ruling Unity Party described the passage of the threshold bill with a condition as illegal.
- The Legislature passed the bill at 40,000 provided no County gets less than two seats.
- The President assured that she would take appropriate actions in accordance with the legal opinion from the Justice Ministry.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Signs Three Bills

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has reportedly signed into law 3 bills including a legislation repealing the act which established the William V.S Tubman College of Technology in Maryland County.

- The Act raises the status of the Technical College to a university level.
- The President also signed into law, an act amending the Liberia Revenue Code of 2000.
- The Code is a requirement for Liberia to achieve the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative status.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

House Extends Session by Two Weeks

- The House of Representatives on Monday passed a motion at a Special Session to extend its session by two weeks.
- The motion is due to be formalized with the signing of a resolution.
- House Speaker Alex Tyler said the extension is to ensure the passage of several Forestry Management Contracts into law.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Defense Ministry Releases Beneficiaries of Chinese Military Training

- The Ministry of National Defense has released the official figure of personnel who have so far benefited from the Chinese military training.
- Defense Minister Brownie Samukai disclosed that two dozen personnel including soldiers and civilians benefitted from the exercise. He made the disclosure on Monday when he received a 7-man Chinese military delegation headed by Major General Liu Haigang.
- Minister Samukai said the training offered the soldiers and civilian staff added value to the military.
- He said the Defense Ministry was hopeful of getting additional training opportunities for soldiers of the Armed Forces and civilian personnel and observed that the Chinese and other partners are desirous of strengthening the capacity of the Liberian army.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., and ELBC)

Rights Lawyer wants President Drop Lawsuit against "New Broom"

- Human rights lawyer Dempster Brown has called on President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to abandon her lawsuit against the New Broom Management.
- Cllr. Brown said the suit has the tendency to damage the presidency and remove the constitutional immunity the president enjoys from any suits.
- Cllr. Brown maintained that legal action against the New Broom Management could also expose the president to many legal suits.
- He wants the president leave the legal battle between the New Broom Newspaper and the Maryland County Legislative Caucus which was accused of receiving 250-thousand USD from the CRC deal.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., and ELBC)

APS in medical outreach in Bomi...100 Eye Patient Seen Daily

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., and ELBC)

African Leaders Want Return to Democratic Rule in Guinea

- The Chairman of the Mano River Union (MRU), President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and her Senegalese counterpart Abdoulaye Wade have reiterated the need for Guinea to return to democratic rule.
- Presidents Sirleaf and Wade highlighted the need for democratic rule during a one-day visit to Guinea, Saturday.
- The two African leaders held talks with Guinean leader, Captain Dadis Camara and reviewed progress for the holding of free and fair elections in Guinea.
- In response, Captain Camara said he's willing to work with the sub-region to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., and ELBC)

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

World Bank Official Promises More Funds for Development Projects

- The World Bank has agreed to help provide additional funds for the completion of the Buchanan-Monrovia highway.
- The visiting Country Director of the World Bank, Dr. Ishac Diwan said the Bank was satisfied with the implementation of its projects in Liberia.
- He said such act encourages the provision of more money for other development projects in Liberia.
- He made the promise following a meeting he held with Grand Bassa County Superintendent Julia Duncan Cassell and representatives of Arcelor Mittal Steel and Buchanan Renewals Energies (BRE).

(Also reported on Sky F.M., and ELBC)

Truth FM *(News monitored today at 10:00am)*

President Sirleaf Lifts Suspension on Education Minister and Two Deputies

UN News

Tuesday, 15 September 2009

UN - Security Council Extends Mandate of Liberia Mission until 30 September 2010, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1885 (2009)

Noting with concern the threats to subregional stability, in particular posed by drug trafficking, organized crime and illicit arms, and reiterating the continuing need for support by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for the security of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Security Council today extended the Mission's mandate until 30 September 2010.

Unanimously adopting resolution 1885 (2009) and acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Council authorized UNMIL to assist the Liberian Government with the 2011 general presidential and legislative elections, endorsing the Secretary-General's recommendation that the conduct of free and fair, conflict-free elections be a core benchmark for UNMIL's future drawdown.

The Council requested the Secretary-General to develop a strategic integrated plan to coordinate activity towards the achievement of benchmarks, emphasizing the need for coherence between, and integration of, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development to achieve an effective response to post-conflict situations.

The Council further endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation to implement the third stage of UNMIL's drawdown, from October 2009 to May 2010, repatriating 2,029 military personnel, leaving the Mission's military strength at 8,202 personnel -- including 250 at the Special Court for Sierra Leone -- and keeping its police component at its current authorized strength.

Reaffirming its intention to authorize the Secretary-General to redeploy troops, as may be needed, between UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on a temporary basis, the Council called on troop-contributing countries to support those efforts.

The meeting started at 10:13 a.m. and adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Resolution

The full text of resolution 1885 (2009) reads as follows:

“The Security Council,

“Recalling its resolutions and statements by its President concerning the situation in Liberia and the subregion, in particular its resolutions 1836 (2008), 1626 (2005) and 1509 (2003),

“Welcoming the Secretary-General's report of 10 August 2009 (S/2009/411), as well as his special report of 10 June 2009 (S/2009/299), and taking note of the recommendations in both reports,

“Welcoming the efforts of the Government of Liberia to further national reconciliation and economic recovery, and to combat corruption and promote efficiency and good governance, in particular steps taken with regard to strengthening Government control over natural resources and to address the important issue of land reform,

“Taking note of the conclusion of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which provides an important opportunity for the people of Liberia to move the national reconciliation agenda forward and engage in a constructive national dialogue on the root causes of the Liberian conflict,

“Recognizing that lasting stability in Liberia and the subregion will require well-functioning and sustainable security and rule of law sectors, and noting the continuing progress being made in developing and professionalizing the Armed Forces of Liberia and the Liberia National Police,

“Recalling the benchmarks for the drawdown phase of United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), including core benchmarks on the Liberia National Police and the national security strategy, and noting with concern those areas where progress is still slow,

“Recognizing the significant challenges that remain across all sectors, including continuing problems with violent crime,

“Welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General to keep all peacekeeping operations, including UNMIL, under close review and stressing the need for the Council to pursue a rigorous, strategic approach to peacekeeping deployments, consistent with the statement of its President dated 5 August 2009 on United Nations peacekeeping operations (S/PRST/2009/24),

“Expressing its appreciation for the continuing support of the international community, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the African Union (AU),

“Noting with concern the threats to subregional stability, including to Liberia, in particular posed by drug trafficking, organized crime, and illicit arms,

“Commending the work of UNMIL, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for its continuing and significant contribution to maintaining peace and stability in Liberia, and welcoming the close cooperation between UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI), as well as with neighbouring Governments, in coordinating security activities in the border areas in the subregion,

“Taking note of the conclusions of the needs assessment mission that evaluated the requirements of the Liberian National Elections Commission to prepare for and conduct the October 2011 general presidential and legislative elections, and stressing that the responsibility for the preparation and conduct of the elections rests with the Liberian authorities, with the support of the international community,

“Welcoming progress achieved on the benchmarks laid out in the Secretary-General’s reports of 12 September 2006, 9 August 2007 and 19 March 2008,

“Recalling its resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) on women, peace, and security and condemning any sexual violence, further welcoming the continuing efforts of UNMIL, in close cooperation with the Government of Liberia, to promote and protect the rights of civilians, in particular women and children, noting with appreciation that the Government’s strategy for implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is in place, recognizing the challenges that remain in addressing the serious issues of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, and calling on member states to increase support to the government in its efforts,

“Encouraging Liberian authorities to expedite their efforts to constitute the Independent National Commission on Human Rights,

“Reiterating the continuing need for UNMIL’s support for the security of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, subject to periodic review as the Court’s work progresses,

“Determining that the situation in Liberia continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region,

“Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

“1. Decides that the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) shall be extended until 30 September 2010;

“2. Authorizes UNMIL to assist the Liberian government with the 2011 general presidential and legislative elections, by providing logistical support, particularly to facilitate access to remote areas, coordinating international

electoral assistance, and supporting Liberian institutions and political parties in creating an atmosphere conducive to the conduct of peaceful elections;

“3. Calls upon Liberian authorities to ensure that the outstanding issues regarding the electoral legal framework, including delineation of constituencies and proposed constitutional amendments, are finalized to facilitate adequate preparations for the elections;

“4. Further endorses the Secretary-General’s recommendation that the conduct of free and fair, conflict-free elections be a core benchmark for UNMIL’s future drawdown;

“5. Reaffirms its intention to authorize the Secretary-General to redeploy troops, as may be needed, between UNMIL and UNOCI on a temporary basis in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1609 (2005) and calls on troop contributing countries to support the efforts of the Secretary-General in this regard;

“6. Endorses the Secretary-General’s recommendation in his special report of 10 June 2009 (S/2009/299) to implement the third stage of UNMIL’s drawdown, from October 2009 to May 2010, repatriating 2,029 military personnel, three attack helicopters, and 72 armoured personnel carriers, leaving UNMIL’s military strength at 8,202 personnel, including 7,952 troops in Liberia and 250 at the Special Court for Sierra Leone and keeping the UNMIL police component at its current authorized strength;

“7. Requests the Secretary-General, following consultations with the Government of Liberia, to develop and submit to the Council a strategic integrated plan to coordinate activity towards the achievement of benchmarks, and recalling the statements of its President on 22 July 2009 (PRST/2009/23) and 5 August 2009 (PRST/2009/24) which emphasized the need for coherence between, and integration of, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development to achieve an effective response to post-conflict situations, requests the Secretary-General to provide in his reports an indication of progress toward achieving a coordinated United Nations approach in Liberia and in particular on critical gaps to achieving peacebuilding objectives;

“8. Underscores the importance that the military concept of operations and rules of engagement be regularly updated and be fully in line with the provisions of this resolution, and requests the Secretary-General to report on them to the Security Council and Troop Contributing Countries;

“9. Further requests the Secretary-General to continue to monitor progress on core benchmarks, in particular on progress on preparations for the 2011 elections, and on the progress made towards building the capability of the Liberia National Police, and to report regularly on that progress to the Security Council;

“10. Calls upon the Government of Liberia, in coordination with UNMIL, the United Nations country team and international partners to redouble efforts to develop national security and rule of law institutions that are fully independently operational, and to this end encourages coordinated progress on the implementation of all Security and Justice Development Plans, including the Liberia National Police strategic plan referenced in paragraph 29 of the Secretary-General’s report of 10 August 2009 (S/2009/411);

“11. Further requests the Secretary-General to keep it regularly informed of the situation on the ground and to provide by 15 August 2010 a report on the issues addressed in paragraphs 2 and 9;

“12. Decides to remain seized of the matter.”

The Independent

Tuesday, 15 September 2009

Museveni, Pinochet and war crimes

By Peter Otika

Uganda and Chile may seem thousands of miles apart; different in cultures and climate, but they share something in common – a history of brutal dictatorship.

Since the return to Uganda of Dr Olara Otunnu, the former Ugandan foreign minister and United Nations Under-Secretary for Children, the debate over genocide and human rights abuses by the Ugandan army in the war-ravaged northern region has been renewed.

Otunnu has for long claimed that Ugandan army of President Yoweri Museveni has since 1986 been committing a slow genocide on the people of northern Uganda – particularly, the Acholi people. Otunnu's revelation brings us to one question; can President Museveni be tried for committing genocide or presiding over atrocities committed by his soldiers in northern Uganda?

A Chilean judge Tuesday September 2, 2009, ordered the arrest of 129 former security operatives of former Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet. Judge Victor Montiglio said the 129 former officers worked for various security agencies including the army, air force, secret services and the uniform police known as the Dina.

Like his African counterparts, Pinochet ruled Chile from 1973-90 and waged a “dirty war” that callously targeted and eliminated members of Chilean Communist Party and opposition members during Operation Condor, the Colombo Operation and the Street Conference to eliminate his Communist opponents.

It is estimated that dictator Pinochet butchered 3,197 members of the Communist opposition and thousands of innocent civilians before he left power in 1990. Many of his victims simply “vanished” as they were kidnapped and killed, then buried in unmarked graves leaving relatives to wonder.

Human rights organizations tried to prosecute Pinochet for human rights abuses when he was still alive but he managed to evade justice when he died two years ago at age 91 - something reminiscent of Idi Amin Dada who brutally ruled Uganda and evaded justice when died peacefully in Saudi Arabia at 82.

In Uganda, hundreds of thousands people mostly from northern and north-eastern part of the country have been brutally killed allegedly by the Ugandan army originally known as National Resistance Army (NRA) led and founded by General Yoweri Museveni, president of Uganda. The NRA was later renamed Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF). The other group accused of gross human rights violations in northern Uganda are Lords Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group led by Joseph Kony.

President Museveni who controls the Ugandan army has been accused of orchestrating a slow genocide in northern Uganda, an allegation he has vigorously denied. In response, he has portrayed and blamed all atrocities in northern Uganda on the LRA.

The point of contention in this allegation however is mostly about the killings done by Museveni's NRA army from 1986-1988, at a time when the LRA was not in existence or was just beginning. From 1986-1988, Museveni's army are alleged to have invaded villages in northern Uganda, killed the people, looted their goods and livestock and destroyed their infrastructure.

Ugandans may not agree on whether the killings in northern Uganda qualify for genocide but Otunnu is not the first to bring out this allegation. Members of Parliament from northern Uganda, local people and some outspoken human rights activists around the world have alleged the same.

The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, enacted in 1951, defines genocide as (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. Whether this partially or fully applies to northern Uganda is a debatable.

When Museveni took over power in 1986, he immediately persecuted anyone who was part of or is alleged to have been part of the previous government of Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa that he overthrew. By 1987, Museveni's troops had extended this persecution on the locals especially in Acholi through what they called Operation North. Operation North was a scorched-earth policy by the NRA in which they were allegedly ordered to kill anything that walks or live: adults, babies, goats, chicken, banana trees, burn down houses, cut down bridges and even defecate in and poison water wells so that local could not drink it.

In 1987, Museveni soldiers arrested dozens of local men in Mukura in Teso eastern Uganda, loaded them in train wagons and set the wagons on fire burning and suffocating them to death. The soldiers also arrested dozens of Acholi men in Burcoro in Gulu district, ordered them to dig a big pit in which they were smoked to death. All these atrocities were not reported by Western media and human rights organizations.

In 1996, Museveni ordered the internment of three million Acholi people in "concentration" camps that he preferred to call internally displaced people's camps (IDPs). In these camps, a United Nations official reported in 2004 that 1,000 people died every week, women were raped by Ugandan troops and the security of the people was not guaranteed because the LRA rebels would invade the camps, killing people and abducting children.

The International criminal court, ICC is prosecuting the leaders of the LRA rebels for human rights violations. The same ICC has refused to prosecute Museveni citing that their terms started after the alleged atrocities happened. But can murder not be murder because it took place long time ago?

The fact that Pinochet's men, Nazi killers, Liberia's Charles Taylor, Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic and even the alleged perpetrators of the Rwanda genocide are facing justice today decades later tells us that justice may be slow, but can be achieved.

The writer is a human rights activist and maybe reached via email at peterotika@hotmail.com This e-mail address is being protected from spambots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it