

**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:

Wednesday, 17 February 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Spectator
Wednesday, 17 February 2010

As Defense Lawyers Re-Examine Charles Taylor, He Explains Covert Bank Account

Former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, today described how he evaded a United Nations arms embargo by funneling millions of dollars through a secret personal bank account to buy arms and ammunition in an effort to defeat rebels threatening to oust his government.

"The largest disbursement from this account went to arms and ammunition," Mr. Taylor said, asserting that the purchase was necessary to fight against Liberians United for Reconciliation and Development (LURD) rebels, since his country was under a United Nations arms embargo.

The bank account, opened in his name at the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI) in 1999 and into which millions of US dollars were deposited during his time as president, was a major focus for

prosecutors' cross-examination of Mr. Taylor. Prosecutors have alleged that the money in this account was not used for official purposes but instead provided a way for Mr. Taylor to divert money away from state coffers in order to enrich himself. Mr. Taylor had dismissed the claim during his cross-examination, and today his defense team helped give him the opportunity to explain the existence of this account during his re-examination.

Mr. Taylor said that the Liberian legislature authorized him to open the secret account in his name, and that it was used both for arms supplies and for other purposes benefiting the Liberian government. "This account is a covert account opened by the government of Liberia at this time. It had to be opened in my name," Mr. Taylor.

"The largest disbursement from this



account went to arms and ammunition. Out of this account, we paid salaries for special units, the ATU [Anti-Terrorist Unit] was paid, the SSS [Special Security Services] was paid, and various presidential projects in dealing with goodwill within that period were paid out of this account. These are the four categories that we paid out of this account," the former president explained.

Mr. Taylor also today told the judges that his former defense minister Daniel Chea was wrong when he told media outfit, Frontline World, during a May 2005 interview that the disarmament process in Liberia in 1995 was a fiasco.

"I fully disagree with Mr. Chea to say that that was a fiasco. I totally disagree. The United Nations, ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States], the African Union, all of the observers said that the disarmament, while it was not total, in fact no disarmament can be total, the statement used

during that period, there was substantial disarmament sufficient to carry out the elections, and so for him to say that it was a fiasco is total nonsense.

Mr. Chea in the May 2005 interview said that Mr. Taylor disappointed the people of Liberia because he opened too many fronts that he could not contain. Mr. Taylor dismissed the assertion as "untrue."

Mr. Taylor concluded his cross-examination by prosecutors on February 6, 2008. Mr. Taylor is now responding to questions from his lawyers in re-direct examination. The former Liberian president is on trial for his alleged support to Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels who waged an 11-years rebel war on the people of Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied all allegations against him, saying that his association with the RUF rebels was purely for peaceful purposes in the West African country.

Global Times

Wednesday, 17 February 2010

The Charles Taylor Trial Part 2

By Lans Gberie

Inside the UN-Sierra Leone Special Court's massive fortification, at a spot close to its small detention centre, is a helicopter landing strip. The strip was furtively constructed about two years ago. When a foreign visitor wondered aloud at the time whether the strip was constructed in preparation for the reception of a certain alleged war criminal at large - Court officials always cannily stoked up such speculation whenever the Court's annual budget was being prepared (the Court subsists on voluntary contributions from UN members, since it lacks the Security Council's Article VII mandate) - officials bridled. Except for the occasional use by the troops guarding the Court, the strip remained derelict, and almost forgotten. When I passed by it in January, I noticed that the grass around it was untamed.

In the last week of March, however, activity mounted around the strip. Senior Court officials confidently asserted that Charles Taylor, the former Liberian President indicted on seventeen (later reduced to eleven) counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Court, will be landed at the strip, and placed in cell Number Three of the adjacent detention centre.

This time they were right. At exactly 7 pm, on 29 March, two UN helicopters, which had taken off from Liberia's Robertsfield International airport, hovered over the Special Court compound. One landed immediately on the strip, and the other continued to hover above. Charles Taylor, formerly most feared warlord (and subsequently Liberia's maximum

president), handcuffed and dressed in a white flowing gown partly covered by a bullet-proof vest, descended from the helicopter flanked by UN soldiers. He looked visibly dazed, and his eyes were downcast. As he walked towards the detention centre, Sierra Leone's Deputy Inspector General of Police, Oliver Somasa, formally arrested Taylor. Two other Sierra Leonean senior police officers joined Somasa, and in a brief ceremony read out the charges against Taylor, along with his rights. Taylor looked glumly on. He was then handed over to the Special Court (this formality necessary because the Court is, at least on paper, a collaborative effort between the Sierra Leone government and the UN) and promptly taken inside the detention centre, from where loud shouts (of welcome?) could be heard from the other detainees, nine Sierra Leoneans who have been there since 2003.

The scene was steeped in bathos: Taylor, once so raffish and forbidding, was now lodged in a small cell in this fortified compound where he had to be told what his rights were. "Today is a momentous occasion and an important day for international justice, the international community, and above all, the people of Sierra Leone," declared the Special Court's Chief Prosecutor, safari-suited British barrister Desmond del Silva.

Taylor's journey to this detention centre began in June 2003 after the Special Court unveiled a long-sealed indictment accusing him of bearing the "greatest responsibility" for heinous offences committed in Sierra Leone's decade-long (1991-2002) war. At the time the indictment drew outrage, both for the manner in which it was delivered, and for its singularly unhelpful timing. Taylor was then in Ghana, the host of the Ghanaian government, and was engaged in peace talks aimed at ending Liberia's then ever-widening humanitarian catastrophe. The talks were sponsored by the African Union and the UN. Other leaders at the talks included South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki and Nigeria's Obasanjo. Slighting this august gather-

Taylor Trial Part 2

(This piece first appeared on Tuesday, April 04, 2006 in the online journal Znet (this is an abridged version) - Lans is back Friday)

ing, the Special Court's then prosecutor, the theatrical David Crane, sent the indictment to the Ghanaian authorities via email, and then organized a press conference in Freetown to announce it. Chargined, Ghana's President John Kuffour put Taylor in a Ghanaian presidential jet, and flew him back to Monrovia. The talks continued, however, and in August Taylor relinquished power and went into self-exile in Nigeria. The understanding was that Taylor would continue to be protected by the Nigerian government, and would not be handed over to the Court. The Special Court mounted a public relations campaign to force Nigeria to hand over Taylor. Law suits were hastily arranged in Nigeria, and Obasanjo, facing unpopularity at home for his plan to seek a third term (illegal under the present constitutional settlement), began to bow to media campaigns by making one fateful promise: he would only hand over Taylor to an elected Liberian president who makes the request. This promise was both characteristically insincere and immensely stupid. Nigeria is a member of the Management Committee (chaired by Canada) which runs the Special Court and has invested billions of dollars and hundreds of its own soldiers lives in the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It therefore surely had the morale authority (more than the US, more than the so-called international community, more than the human rights brigade) either to reject outright any pressure to hand in Taylor, or simply comply with the demand. Instead, Obasanjo gambled that a deal would be struck with any incoming Liberian leader, since such a leader would surely feel beholden to the Nigerian leadership.

In the event Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who had initially stated, correctly, that the Taylor issue was none of her business, came under intense pressure from the human rights community as her visit to the US loomed. Being Liberian, the enticement to make the request for the handing in of Taylor - a welcome to the White House, dinner with the President, perhaps an address to the Congress, and all the usual blandishments about that historical cord tying Liberia to the US (even though the Americans would end up giving the struggling new Liberian government only \$50 million) - was irresistible. Johnson-Sirleaf now said, again correctly, that the fate of one Liberian should not hold a nation of three million hostage; and she formally made the request to Obasanjo. Almost immediately, funny things began to happen.

Obasanjo did not hand over Taylor promptly after Johnson-Sirleaf's request, as he had promised. Instead, his office peevishly declared that the Liberians were free to go take Taylor in Nigeria: Taylor, the Nigerians said, was a refugee, not a detainee, implying that the indicted war criminal was free to go where he pleased. This was, of course, a tad disingenuous; and when a day later Taylor was reported to have 'disappeared' from the Calabar villa where he had been living since he left Liberia, there was understandable outrage. The 'escape' was clumsily choreographed: two days later, the Nigerians announced that Taylor had been arrested trying to enter Cameroon in a 'diplomatic car' (Desperation can lead to foolishness but it is hard to imagine the wily Taylor thinking that traveling in a car with a diplomatic plate confers anonymity.)

Taylor was then flown to Robertsfield airport in Liberia, and handed over to the UN authorities, fulfilling, in a way, his last wish upon relinquishing power: 'God willing, I will be back!' In a few hours he was headed for Sierra Leone. A woman in the crowd

outside the Special Court building after Taylor was sent to his cell turned to me and said, apropos of a statement made by Taylor in 1990, 'He told us that we in Sierra Leone will taste the bitterness of war. We did. But now he is enjoying the sweetness of justice.'

A few days later, on 3 April, Taylor was formally charged in court. The case, with the delicately inclusive title 'The Prosecutor against Charles Ghankay Taylor also known as Dankpannah Charles Ghankay Taylor also known as Dankpannah Charles Ghankay Macarthur Taylor', alleges that from 1996 to 2002 Taylor committed "crimes against humanity, violations of Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and of additional Protocol II and other serious violations of international humanitarian law" in Sierra Leone. The indictment states that throughout Sierra Leone's war, "Liberian fighters" [under [Taylor's] control and/or operating in Sierra Leone with [Taylor's] consent] fought alongside the RUF, causing enormous destruction and rights violation, perpetuating terrorist violence, looting the country's resources, and raping women. The indictment states that Taylor was a mentor and sponsor of the RUF, and did so for personal enrichment, in particular the stealing of Sierra Leone's mineral resources, especially diamonds.

Taylor, therefore, bears 'the greatest responsibility' for the war and for the atrocities that characterized it. While most of the charges have been already independently arrived at by others, the notion of 'greatest responsibility' creates a kind of linguistic and philosophical tangle. Twelve others have been similarly alleged to bear such responsibility. By alleging each of them to bear the 'greatest' responsibility, observers say, the word 'greatest' itself loses its heuristic value. This will likely be a point of contest in the coming months.

Earlier, the Special Court, acting on the request President Johnson-Sirleaf, had sought to transfer the trial to The Hague. Provision is made for this in the statute setting up the Court. Its Article 9 states that "The Special Court shall have its seat in Sierra Leone. The Court may meet away from its seat if it considers it necessary for the efficient exercise of its functions, and may be relocated outside Sierra Leone, if circumstances so require." Court officials say that the widespread fear that Taylor's trial in Sierra Leone may undermine regional security has made it necessary for the trial to be conducted in Europe.

In Court, Taylor, appearing impeccably dressed in a black suit and maroon tie, and fidgeting with his fingers while the charges were read, rejected this option, stating that if the venue were moved out of Sierra Leone, his relatives and friends would not be able to visit him. He began, unsurprisingly, by challenging the right of the Court to try him, stating that while he "did not and could not have committed [the crimes]" in the indictment, he would not be responding to the charges. The Court took it that it was a plea of not guilty. Then his lawyers added, surprisingly, that Taylor was indigent and would therefore be relying on the lawyers provided by the Court to defend him. Everyone appeared stunned. After a few lugubrious technical exchanges, the matter was adjourned. Taylor was on trial....

Charlestaylortrial.org

Tuesday, 15 February 2010

Charles Taylor Did Not Work For The CIA, He Did Not Manipulate Prosecution Witnesses, He Says

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor did not work for the United States' top spy agency while he was a rebel leader in Liberia, but did receive sophisticated communication equipment from the agency in the hope that Mr. Taylor's forces could help protect American citizens and property during Liberia's brutal civil conflict, he told the Special Court for Sierra Leone today.

Prosecutors have previously accused Mr. Taylor of working for the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) while at the same time collaborating with the Libyan government which provided support to his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group. In his re-examination today, the former president denied working for the CIA.

"I have never, ever, and will not ever work for the CIA or any other intelligence agency, never, no," the former president told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today.

Mr. Taylor's lead defense lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths, further asked the former president about prosecution allegations that he provided information to the CIA. Mr. Taylor insisted that he did not. However, Mr. Taylor did return to a statement he made during cross-examination on November 16, 2009, in which he denied that he was an agent of the CIA but indicated that his NPFL rebel group did share information with the US intelligence agency.

"The organization [NPFL] provided information to the CIA. The NPFL at the time did provide information to the CIA and there was information from the CIA to us too. There was exchange of information, mostly from between 1991-92," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also said that the CIA provided sophisticated communications equipments to the NPFL because they wanted his rebel group to protect American citizens and properties in Liberia during the country's conflict.

In other developments today, Mr. Taylor denied prosecution allegations that he used his telephone services in his detention facility to manipulate witnesses set to testify for the prosecution. Prosecutors have previously alleged that Mr. Taylor worked with associates in Liberia to intimate and discourage people from testifying against him.

Mr. Taylor today dismissed the allegations, telling judges that the court's registrar, who oversees his detention in The Hague, has never accused him of misusing the telephone services provided to him. He said that all his telephone calls are fully supervised and are arranged after intensive investigations on who he wants to call.

"First, I have to submit a number of an individual that I would like to call at some time, the process takes two weeks for the Sierra Leonean court and the facilities to do their security checks on the number and the individual," Mr. Taylor said. "After about two weeks, that number is approved for calling. I cannot just

automatically get up and say, please call this number, no, it has to be vetted and approved by the Sierra Leonean court.”

Mr. Taylor also today distanced himself from a January 5, 1999 letter written by former Sierra Leonean president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, to the United Nations Secretary General in which the former Liberian president was accused of providing support to Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels who were at that time waging war in Sierra Leone.

“I have a mountain of evidence that rebel offensive has been supported and sustained by the Taylor government,” President Kabbah’s letter noted.

Dismissing the letter as nonsense, Mr. Taylor explained how he would have reacted if he had received a copy of the said letter.

“I would have taken a different disposition during that particular period that Kabbah — who was calling me and talking to me and visiting Liberia — could write a letter making such an accusation. It would have probably changed me significantly,” Mr. Taylor said.

The former Liberian president added that if he had received the said letter, he would have removed himself from the Committee of Five, a committee established by West African leaders to facilitate a peaceful end to the conflict in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law in relation to his alleged role in supporting and controlling Sierra Leonean rebels who committed mass crimes during the brutal civil conflict in his neighboring country.

Mr. Taylor’s re-examination continues tomorrow.

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST
Monday, 15 February 2010

John Kollie

NEWS ITEM

Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor has denied any double dealing with Libya and the Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA. Mr. Taylor also dismissed as untrue Former Sierra Leone President, Tejan Kabbah's letter which accuses him of supporting and sustaining rebel activities in that country. The Former Liberian Leader also denied using telephone in the detention facility to manipulate Prosecution witnesses. John Kollie has this transcribed report from The Hague....

Prosecutors during cross-examination accused Mr. Taylor of double dealing with the Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA and the North African Country of Libya. They alleged that Libya assisted the Former Liberian Leader to launch his revolution in Liberia while at the same he was working for the CIA.

On re-direct examination, Mr. Taylor told the court that the CIA gave sophisticated communication equipment to his rebel movement, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, the NPFL.

He said the American Intelligence Organization wanted the NPFL to ensure the protection of American Citizens and Properties in Liberia during the war. But Mr. Taylor denied ever working for the CIA.

Former Sierra Leone President, Tejan Kabbah told the United Nations Secretary General in a letter dated January 5, 1999, that Liberia's Charles Taylor was supporting rebels in his country. 'I have mountain of evidence that rebel offensive has been supported and sustained by the Taylor Government, Mr. Kabbah declared in his letter read in court.

Mr. Taylor described Mr. Kabbah's allegation as total nonsense, and said he would have reacted strongly if he had received a copy of that letter. The Former Liberian Leader on Tuesday denied using telephone in his detention facility to manipulate Prosecution witnesses.

Mr. Taylor said the surveillance kept over all his calls made it impossible for him to have interfered with Prosecution witnesses. The Prosecution alleged during their case that Mr. Taylor and his Associates in Liberia threatened and discouraged some of their witnesses from testifying against him.

But Mr. Taylor told the court that the Registrar of the Special Court who has oversight responsibility for his wellbeing in prison has never accused him of any misuse of his telephone.

The Former Liberian President explained to the court how all his telephone calls are arranged by the prison guards. The re-direct examination of Mr. Taylor continues on Wednesday.

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary
16 February 2010**

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia on track for HIPC debt relief this year: IMF

Tue Feb 16, 2010

MONROVIA (Reuters) - Liberia is on track to clear much of its remaining \$1.7 billion in foreign debt under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative by the end of this year, an IMF official said on Tuesday. "We are very confident that by the end of the year, Liberia will reach the HIPC completion point," said IMF First Deputy Managing Director John Lipsky, adding that it could be "much sooner." Liberia, Africa's oldest independent republic, still recovering from a 1989-2003 civil war, was deemed eligible for the HIPC program in 2008 pending certain economic and structural reforms. Lipsky said the government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf had since made strong advances in financial management and transparency in the mining and energy sectors that had put it on track for HIPC completion.

Zambian firms bid to run Liberia utility: paper

Tue Feb 16, 2010

LUSAKA (Reuters) - Zambian state utility Zesco and Copperbelt Energy Corp. (CEC), the sole distributor of power to the country's mines, have been shortlisted to manage the Liberia Electricity Corporation, a newspaper said on Tuesday. Neil Croucher, CEC managing director, told Zambia's The Post newspaper the Liberia Electricity Corporation had prequalified a consortium formed by Zesco and CEC to run the Liberian utility. "We believe we have the expertise to efficiently operate that utility and our bid has been prequalified to the next stage whose outcome will be announced on March 16, 2010," he said. "In the event that we are unsuccessful, we will have demonstrated our ability to work with Zesco as a partner in high profile international projects." The other companies shortlisted to manage the Liberian utility, whose infrastructure was run down during the civil war, are Canada's Manitoba Hydro International, NTE of Norway and Siemens, Croucher said.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

Guinea unveils new transitional government

Source: Press TV.

Tue, 16 Feb 2010

Caretaker Prime Minister Jean-Marie Dore is tasked with leading Guinea towards its first democratic elections. Guinea's interim leader General Sekouba Konate has appointed a transition government to steer the West African country from military back to civilian rule. The 34-member government line-up was proposed by caretaker Prime Minister Jean-Marie Dore, an official televised statement said Monday. It includes 10 members of the ruling military junta, including six military officers. Guinea's current Minister of Security and Civil Protection Mamadouba Toto Camara and Justice Minister Siba Lohalamou — both senior figures in the ruling military junta — are to remain in their posts. Dore, who was given the job under a January 15 deal, is tasked with leading the country towards its first

democratic elections since a military coup in 2008. He has promised free and fair elections. Soon after his appointment last month, Dore called for a military overhaul with the support of the international community. Guinea was rocked with a political and human rights crisis after Captain Moussa Dadis Camara took over the country in December 2008, within hours after the death of long-time dictator General Lansana Conte.

Ivory Coast

I.Coast to name new government Tuesday: presidency

February 16, 2010

ABIDJAN (AFP) - Ivory Coast will name a new government on Tuesday, four days after President Laurent Gbagbo dissolved the last administration, his office said. "The new government will be presented today at 4:00 pm (1600 GMT) in Yamoussoukro," the capital, the presidency said. Gbagbo caused a storm of opposition protest when he sacked the government on Friday, telling Prime Minister Guillaume Soro to form a new administration.

He also dismissed the head of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), alleging that more than 400,000 names had been fraudulently added to the electoral rolls. The surprise sackings cast doubt on the divided West African country's ability to hold scheduled elections next month. Gbagbo has remained in power for 10 years without seeking a second mandate after five, deferring elections six times following a failed 2002 coup which split the country in two.

United Nations: Top UN official in Cote d'Ivoire holds talks with Prime Minister over political crisis

Feb 16, 2010 (M2 PRESSWIRE via COMTEX) -- The head of the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Cote d'Ivoire met today with the country's Prime Minister to stress the need to resolve mounting political tensions in the fragile West African country, where the Government and the independent electoral authority have just been dissolved ahead of scheduled elections. Y. J. Choi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and the head of the mission (known as UNOCI), held talks in Abidjan with Guillaume Soro 'during this delicate and sensitive moment,' according to a statement released by the mission. Mr. Choi is holding talks with Ivorian political leaders this week to try to assist the country's political process, at risk after violent tensions flared in several towns this month. UNOCI also has its forces on alert in case of renewed fighting.

Local Media – Newspaper

Former LTA Chairman Albert Bropleh Breaks Silence

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, In-Profile and National Chronicle)

- The Former Chairman of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority, Albert Bropleh has broken silence over his indictment by Government on allegations of fraud and theft.
- Mr. Bropleh believes the indictment has absolutely no basis and that it contains serious implications.
- In a dispatch, Mr. Bropleh said since the issuance of the indictment he has been at home within Monrovia contrary to claims that his whereabouts were unknown.
- He said his indictment was not only troubling but speaks volumes about what he called the sorry state of good governance in Liberia.
- Meanwhile, the former LTA Chairman has described the General Auditing Commission (GAC) audit against him as full of malice, prejudice and deliberate lies and false hood.

Executive Mansion Gives Reasons That Prompted Resignation of former Internal Affairs Minister

(The News and The Inquirer)

- The Executive Mansion has given reasons behind the President's request for the resignation of Internal Affairs Minister Ambullai Johnson.
- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio disclosed that Mr. Johnson was asked to resign for failure to follow procurement guidelines in the implementation of the Acelor Mittal's Social Development Fund.
- In an interview, Mr. Badio said as head of the Project Management Team, Mr. Johnson had specific guidelines to follow but did not give detail.
- Press Secretary Badio dismissed reports of misapplication of the social development fund saying, it has not been established.
- Recently, Nimba County Senator Prince Johnson accused the former Minister of Internal Affairs of malpractice and interference in the use of the Acelor Mittal Social Fund. Mr. Johnson has since denied the allegations.
- Meanwhile, the opposition Liberty Party has called on President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to prevent the former Internal Affairs Minister from leaving the Country.
- In a statement, the party said it was a disservice for Ambullai Johnson to resign and be let off the hook in the midst of wide allegations.

IMF Delegation Impressed With Liberia's Progress

(The Inquirer and The News)

- The visiting First Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mr. John Lipsky, at the conclusion of his visit to Liberia said that he has no doubt that Liberia will reach HIPC point by the end of the year, leading to the cancellation of more than \$4 billion.
- The IMF First Deputy managing Director said that this success was possible because of the discipline and sound policy framework put in place by Government.
- According to an Executive Mansion release, Mr. Lipsky spoke to the press after a meeting with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
- The IMF Deputy managing Director was accompanied by Dr. Antoinette Sayeh, former Minister of Finance of Liberia and now Africa Director at the IMF in Washington as well as the Country Director for Liberia at the IMF.

Alterations Claims On Public Finance Act

(New Democrat)

- [SIC]Several provisions within the Public Finance Management Act of 2009 have been grossly tempered with and altered, months after its enactment, reports say.
- The law's implementation is a key conditionality under the Highly Indebted Poor countries (HIPC) initiative.
- It spelt out fundamental procedures for the preparation adoption, execution and final accounts of the national budget and other matters relative to the management of public finance within the country.
- Reports say at the moment, there are two distinct versions of the law in circulation.
- The legislators' version is dissimilar to the version that the President signed and printed into handbills at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Former PPCC Boss Murder Trial Resumes Tomorrow

(The Informer)

- Criminal Court "A" has set tomorrow to begin hearings into the murder trial of the former Chairman of the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC), Mr. Keith Jubah.

- The late Jubah was allegedly killed by a group of men in Margibi County in early November last year.
- The state has charged nine men, Tommy Cooper, Caesar Kolako, Joseph Kerkula, Andrew Pawee, Joe Harris, Zinnah Padmore, Joseph O. Kollie, James Langia and Singbeh Padmore with Criminal Conspiracy, Murder and Criminal Mischief in connection with the murder.

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

Former LTA Chairman Albert Bropleh Breaks Silence

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

IMF Delegation Discusses Progress to HIPC Point for Liberia

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

Executive Mansion Gives Reasons That Prompted Resignation of former Internal Affairs Minister

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

Petition to Halt Threshold bill reaches Supreme Court

- A petition seeking a halt to the approval of the threshold bill by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has been taken to the Supreme Court.
- Some lawmakers and their counties filed the petition against the Legislature and the President.
- The petitioners claimed the lawmakers flagrantly violated Article 35 of the constitution in the process of enacting the bill.
- They also said since the president vetoed the bill, and the House of Representatives failed to override the veto, it was unconstitutional for the Senate to have taken another vote on the matter.
- Meanwhile, Justice Ja'neh has placed a stay order on the threshold issue pending the outcome of a conference with the parties today.

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

President Sirleaf Makes New Appointments in Government

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Monday made new appointments in Government subject, where applicable, to confirmation by the Liberian senate.
- Those appointed are Mr. John B.S. Davies, Comptroller General, Ministry of Finance; Mr. Caine Prince Andrew, Assistant Minister for Administration, Ministry of Finance; Professor Jallah Allan Barbu, Commissioner, Land Reform Commission; Attorney Deweh Gray, Commissioner, Land Reform Commission; Moses Wogbeh, Managing Director, Forestry Development Authority and Asatu Bah-Kenneth, Assistant Minister for Administration and Public Safety, Ministry of Justice.
- Other are Adella Cooper, Assistant Minister for economic affairs, Ministry of Justice; Beauford Weeks, Assistant Minister for energy, Ministry of Land, Mines and Energy among others.

Reports Say Former Internal Affairs Boss Given option to Resign or be Dismissed

- [SIC] Latest reports say former Internal Affairs Minister, Ambullai Johnson was given the option to resign or be dismissed by President Ellen Johnson.
- Executive Mansion and family sources said the former Minister was given the option after the President expressed disappointment in him.
- The sources said the President had lost confidence in Mr. Johnson because of his role in the handling of development and other funds entrusted to him.

The Institute for War & Peace Reporting

Wednesday, 17 February 2010

Child soldiers still being recruited in Congo

By Melanie Gouby Evariste Mahamba and Esperance Nzigire

GOMA, Democratic Republic of Congo — The indictment and trial of a former militia leader before the International Criminal Court has failed to deter others from committing the same crime he stands accused of: the recruitment of children to serve as soldiers.

"The recruitment carries on, especially in the territories where the (government's) authority is not well established yet," said Pascal Badibangua, the director of a center that helps former child soldiers reintegrate into civilian life.

"I have just returned from a mission (to the North Kivu province) where I had the opportunity to see that armed groups are still recruiting child soldiers, despite it being illegal," he said.

Some had hoped that the arrest and trial of Thomas Lubanga, the former president of the Union of Congolese Patriots, would have stopped the practice. Lubanga is currently on trial in The Hague where he faces charges of recruiting, conscripting and using child soldiers in 2002 and 2003.

Child soldiers have been a mainstay of both the Congolese army and the various militias that it has battled during more than a decade of war. A United Nations-backed reintegration program reported having demobilized nearly 30,000 children by mid-2007, according to a report from the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, which was published in 2008.

Still, the report concluded, at least 7,000 child soldiers are still members of armed groups or the Congolese national army.

It was hoped that the pioneering nature of the charges against Lubanga would deter other rebel leaders.

But so far the trial does not appear to be working as a deterrent.

"I cannot say that the Lubanga trial, to date, has been a catalyst in the prevention of the recruitment of child soldiers," said Bukeni Tete Waruzi, an expert on child soldiers for Witness, an international human-rights organization.

"At least we know that the court has the capacity to punish people who commit this crime. But we cannot see the actual impact very well, since children are still being integrated into armed groups," he said.

The court maintains that its work is having a real impact, which will become more noticeable over time.

"(The impact) can only increase with the progress of the procedures at the court" said Pascal Turlan from the office of the prosecutor at the court. "We have already seen encouraging signs, in particular from military leaders who have recently joined the demobilization process." The court has taken some steps towards raising its profile in the Congo, such as organized screenings of the Lubanga court proceedings.

As for the child soldiers themselves, they often have a hard time adjusting to civilian life after being demobilized.

In Rutshuru, a town about 40 miles from the provincial capital Goma, the head of a support group for former child soldiers who asked that his name not be used because he was not authorized to speak on the subject, said youths often find it hard to reintegrate into society, and remain vulnerable to militias on the lookout for new recruits.

"The children are manipulated (by militia leaders) and told that they must protect their tribe," he said. "They are also (harassed) by the police and the military, who tear up their certificates of reintegration. When the children feel insecure, they go back to the bush."

ABOUT THE WRITERS

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The Sudan Tribune

Wednesday, 17 February 2010

ICC prosecutor to appeal ruling against Darfur rebel commander

The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Luis Moreno-Ocampo will file a leave to appeal this month's ruling acquitting a Darfur rebel commander from charges that he was one of the masterminds behind the 2007 deadly attack on African Union peacekeepers.



FILE - Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo (C) and his team are seated for the court appearance of Darfur rebel leader Bahr Idriss Abu Garda, at the International Criminal Court in The Hague May 18, 2009 (Reuters)

Last week, the Pre-Trial Chamber I at the ICC said in their 103-pages decision on the confirmation of charges hearings that took place last October that the prosecution failed to prove that Bahr Idriss Abu Garda, leader of Darfur United Resistance Front (URF), played a role in the deadly assault that left 12 soldiers dead and wounded eight others.

Abu Garda was the first individual to appear before The Hague based court in connection with the Darfur case. The rebel chief agreed to surrender himself voluntarily last year to face the charges saying he is confident of his innocence.

Two other unidentified rebel commanders accused of staging the attack are still at large amid reports last week that an attempt is made to have them voluntarily appear before the judges in a manner similar to Abu Garda.

The ICC prosecutor's office said in its weekly newsletter that it will challenge the finding that there was "no substantial grounds to believe that Abu Garda could be linked to the crimes either as a direct or indirect co perpetrator for the commission of war crimes allegedly committed during the attack".

The prosecution had alleged that the attack on Haskanita was agreed upon by Abu Garda and other senior commanders of armed rebel groups in the course of two meetings on September 29 2007. The first meeting occurred "shortly after the attack on the rebel forces in Dalil Babiker, which had allegedly been carried out by the GoS around midday on 29 September 2007".

"At the location where the JEM and combined SLA-Unity and SLA Abdul-Shafi forces had retreated, near Dalil Babiker, Mr. Abu Garda allegedly met with JEM and SLA-Unity commanders" and "at the meeting these commanders agreed among themselves to attack the MGS Haskanita".

The second meeting took place in a forest near the camp "after which they directed their respective troops to move behind them and distributed their troops in various vehicles".

If the judges grant the prosecutor the leave to appeal he can proceed to the appellate chamber to dispute the ruling.

Abu Garda has hailed the decision by the judges last week saying he has always maintained his innocence and stressing that he stands ready to re-appear before the judges if necessary.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Monday, 15 February 2010

Film symposium: The Circle of Genocide

By International Justice Desk (IJT)



Amsterdam, Netherlands

Radio Netherlands Worldwide & the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies present *The Circle of Genocide: on the universality of genocidal processes*. The series start with the premiere of *Worse than War*, the first major documentary to explore the phenomenon of genocide and how we can stop it.

Mass killings and systematic human rights abuses are not restricted to the past - the possibility of genocide is a live issue for any society.

But there is still a serious lack of understanding of how these crimes come about.

The Circle of Genocide series is an interaction between scholars and journalists. Combining film, debate and interview, it explores different stages in the genocidal process and its aftermath and offers a comparative analysis of the worst of crimes.

All events take place at 7.30pm, at CREA Theater, Turfdragsterpad 17, Amsterdam

Program

February 18th, Introduction

Speaker: Dr. Ton Zwaan, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Worse than War: Genocide, Eliminationism, and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity (USA, 2010) PREMIERE

March 25th, Foreshadowing Genocide

Speaker: Christophe Busch, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Education, Belgium

Conspiracy (USA, 2001)

April 26th, Destruction

Speaker: Prof. Dr. Filip Reyntjens, University of Antwerp

Iseta: Behind the roadblock (Kenya, 2008)

May 17th, Coming to terms?

Speaker: Mustafa Akyol, Turkish Daily News

The Armenian Genocide (USA, 2006)

June 7th, International Justice

Speaker: Wayne Jordash, International Criminal Defense Attorney

The Tribunal (Germany, 2009)